BEMBRIDGE

An Historical and General Survey

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BRADING, AND BRADING HARBOUR

Before the last reclamation of land (about 1880)

942.2831

BEMBRIDGE

An Historical
and
General Survey

BY MEMBERS OF BEMBRIDGE SCHOOL

EDITED BY

J. HOWARD WHITEHOUSE
WARDEN

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BEMBRIDGE AND YAR ISLAND

AN HISTORICAL AND GENERAL SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

The contents of this book are the work of boys of Bembridge School with some contributions from members of the staff. Its origin was due to the foundation by a number of the boys of a society for the study of local history. A series of meetings were held, various subjects were allotted to different members to study and write upon, and at later meetings the papers prepared were read and criticized.

It has been decided to publish the results of the work of the society, not as an example of antiquarian knowledge, or scholarly research, but as the record of a co-operative experiment, voluntarily undertaken, which not only gave pleasure to those who took part in it, but, by stimulating interest in local history and traditions, encouraged those who took part in the work to care for the larger aspects of history and social relationships.

Perhaps the most valuable part of the experiment is to be found in the impetus which it gave to intellectual interests pursued under conditions of true co-operation, conditions, too, which enabled each boy to work at something which reflected his own

interests, and, in doing so, to enlarge them and, it may be, to acquire others.

In a work of this kind it has not been possible to impose an arbitrary limit upon the subjects dealt with. I have included a short sketch of the history of the island as being strictly relevant in a book mainly concerned with Bembridge and district, for we have sought to avoid studying our own history as a water-tight compartment.

We can only hope that those into whose hands this book falls will receive it in the spirit in which it was written, the expression of a fellowship in a little intellectual adventure which need not end with its publication.

J. H. WHITEHOUSE.

A SHORT SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT

By F. M. Lowenstein.

Prehistoric times to the coming of the Romans.

In the days when we get the first and vaguest information about the Isle of Wight, the island was a mass of primaeval forests and swamp, broken here and there by patches of open ground. As it is said to have owed its name to the Iberians, the earliest known inhabitants of the British Isles, it is fairly safe to assume that the Isle of Wight was inhabited by this race along with the rest of the country, but no proof exists. The Celts are the earliest inhabitants of whose existence in the island definite information remains. The Britons occupied it first, and, according to Julius Caesar, the Belgae, a Celtic nation, emigrated in 85 B.C. from the Netherlands, and settled in the island. Although of the wars and rulers of these Celtic tribes we know next to nothing, the Celtic invasion has left relics behind to show for certain that their occupation of the island was no myth or fable, but an historical fact. In the first place there are in the island several Celtic roots in the names of places. For example, the river Lugley comes from a Celtic root, which is also found in the river Lug in Herefordshire. Another example is the river Medina, the word 'Med' being Celtic, and also appearing in the rivers Medway and Mede in England.

Besides these names there are a few material remains of the Celtic period, the most important being the

tumuli, or burial places of the chiefs, many of which are distributed on the Downs, there being three in the vicinity of Bembridge. There are some small remains of a Celtic earthwork at Carisbrooke, near Newport. No other examples of Celtic civilization remain, and it is to be supposed that the islanders were disunited, for, when Vespasian invaded the island in 43 B.C., he conquered it with the greatest of ease.

It is believed that the Isle of Wight is the 'Ictis' of the Roman historian Diodorus. Ictis was the great dépôt for the produce of the Cornish tin mines, the tin being brought across at low water. It is true that the Solent is not fordable now at low water, but great physical changes have taken place since the time of the early Romans.

Saxon Period.

Though no definite evidence marks the withdrawal of the Romans from the island, it is almost certain to have taken place in the fifth century A.D. A coin is said to have been found in the island dating from 402 or later, which seems to prove that the Romans left the island later than the more important parts of England, which were evacuated in A.D. 410. It was at this time that the Teutonic hordes were sweeping down on our shores, and in A.D. 530 the Jutes, a weaker tribe than the Saxons, from Denmark and North Germany, came to the shores of the Isle of Wight. Between the Roman withdrawal and the Jutish invasion there is no information to be learned about the island, and it is to be supposed that the old inhabitants were left to themselves. However, in A.D. 530 the Jutes, under the leadership of two brothers, Cerdic and Cymric, invaded the island and

subjected it after a battle at Whit-garas-burk, the Saxon name for Carisbrooke, where a terrible massacre of the ancient inhabitants ensued. These two ruled for four years, and in A. D. 534 the control was handed over to Cerdic's two nephews, Stuf and Whitgar. The latter was the first man to obtain complete rule of the island. He was the supreme ruler of the island for ten years, during which time he built a new town at Carisbrooke. After the death of Whitgar in 544 there is no information concerning the island to be learned for over a hundred years, when it appears again in the Anglo-Saxon chronicles. According to the latter, in 661, during one of the numerous wars between the great rival kingdoms, Mercia and Wessex, the king of the former State, by name Wulfhere, defeated Cenwalt, the king of Wessex, and, to quote the chronicles, 'passed through the enemy's province with a vast army, made war against the Isle of Wight, situate opposite, and conquered it'. It may be noted that the island was still heathen at this time, though nearly all England was Christian. Indeed, in this year, Aedelward, king of the South Saxons, attempted to convert the island, but failed, and it was not until 686, or more than twenty years after the conversion of the rest of England, that the Isle of Wight was Christianized. This was due to the conquest of the isle by the West Saxons, under the kingship of Caedwalla and his brother Mul. There was a terrible slaughter of the Jutes, and the island became a part of Wessex. Some authorities maintain that it was afterwards given its independence, and remained free till the time of Alfred the Great, but opinions differ. However, the fact remains that Caedwalla conquered the island, enforced Christianity, and, in accordance

with a vow made before the conquest, presented a quarter of the island to Bishop Wilfrid. It is of interest to note that the first Christian church which was built in the island was at Brading. In A.D. 730 the island became the seat of a bishopric under Bishop Daniel of Winchester, but in A.D. 826 by a decree of Egbert, the first king of united England, it was incorporated in the see of the Bishop of Winchester, in which diocese it remains to this day. It is not until the reign of Alfred the Great, the grandson of Egbert, that the name of the island reoccurs in history. In 896, however, the islanders experienced an attack of those terrible plunderers and pirates, the Danes. In this year they came with six ships, and a naval battle ensued, believed to be at Bembridge (dealt with elsewhere). In 998, during the reign of the unfortunate king, Ethelred, surnamed the Unready, when the Danes were ravaging the shores of England without ceasing, they attacked the Isle of Wight. Again during 1001 they continually ravaged the unfortunate isle, making it a dépôt for their plunder, and their rendezvous for attacks on the mainland. Their strength appears to have been irresistible. Indeed, to quote again the Saxon Chroniclers: 'They roamed about even as they pleased and nothing could withstand them, nor durst any fleet by sea oppose them, nor land forces neither, howsoever far into the land they penetrated. Then it was a grievous time, inasmuch as they never rested from their evil doings.' Indeed, it was only by the payment of ransom that it was possible to get rid of the terrible rovers. It may be noted that the idea of paying ransom to get rid of the Danes was freely used by Ethelred the Unready, and was nearly always unsuccessful. It was the same

case in the island. The peace only lasted five years, and in 1006 the Danes attacked again, and in 1009 once again. However, these miseries of the inhabitants were ended in 1022. King Cnut, the Danish monarch, reigning in England at the time, visited the island and restored order by defeating the Norsemen. It is true that the island was raided once more in 1045, but this was no Danish exploit, but merely an expedition made by Earl Godwin, as a reprisal for the insulting treatment meted out to him by Edward the Confessor and his Norman favourites. In the following years Godwin used the island for a rendezvous in his struggle against the Normans, getting his supplies there. Halley's comet was seen in the island, and very soon afterwards the fleet of Tostig, on its way to invade England, hove in sight. However, all they did was to demand money and provisions. All through the summer of 1066, King Harold kept his court in state at Carisbrooke, waiting for the invasion of the Normans, and in 1066 the Saxon epoch ended in the island. The Saxons in the later part of their sway in the island seem to have reached a very high grade of civilization. Although the earlier relics are mostly rude spears, such things as bracelets, well-made swords, knives, forks, rings, children's toys, and many other things have been found dating from the Saxon times. Of Danish civilization, though the Danes occupied the island often, a small entrenchment at Carisbrooke is all that remains.

Norman Conquest to modern times.

When William conquered England after the battle of Hastings in 1066, and was dividing up the country among his principal supporters, the Isle of Wight was

given as a part of the reward of Baron William Fitz Osbern, one of William's chief advisers and best friends. The Baron owned it as a lordship, and the king had no right to levy the services of the inhabitants in war, but received tribute in money from the lord. The most important thing which Fitz Osbern did was to strengthen his position in the island by fortifying the keep of the castle of Carisbrooke. The duration of the Baron's rule in the island was short, for in 1070 he was killed in a skirmish in Flanders. Another act of note was the founding of the priory at Carisbrooke, the object of this being to gain the favour of the Clergy. The successor in the lordship was Roger, the son of the last ruler. However, only eight years later, in 1078, the rule of the Fitz Osbern family came to an abrupt end. Roger was found guilty of treason against the crown, and the island was forfeited to the king. The island, without any actual government, became the rendezvous for every one who was discontented. Here came the king's brother-in-law, Bishop Odo of Bayeux, and here he made his preparations for his expedition to Rome in his attempt to become Pope, when William the Conqueror came to the island and arrested his adventurous relative at Carisbrooke. The island remained in this position until 1101, when Henry I gave the control to a certain Richard de Redvers. For nearly two hundred years the Isle of Wight was under the lordship of this family, but little or nothing of historical importance occurs, and it is of no interest to record the mere names and marriages of the rulers of the island. However, Edward I in his desire for a great united island empire, comprising the whole of England, Scotland, and Wales, and thinking the independence

of the island lords too great, found a pretext for the annexation of the Isle of Wight in 1293, by the death of the Lady of the island, by name Isabella de Fortibus, an indirect descendant of Richard de Redvers. Edward I, having gained possession of the island, ruled it by means of Governors, called Wardens, who were responsible to him. Edward spared no pains in putting the island into a state of defence. It was divided into nine standing military districts, the far eastern one consisting of Yaverland, Bembridge, and Brading, the leader being the owner of Yaverland Manor, at that time Sir William Russell, who was the principal knight of the district. Beacons were put up everywhere, the one on St. Helens Hill guarding the Spithead and visible as far as Shanklin. These preparations were by no means unnecessary, for, in 1340, the French invaded the island for the first time, landing at St. Helens. At that time the sea extended to Brading and beyond, and the French crossed the narrow arm of water by the existing bridge, and advanced to the town of Wolverton, which they sacked. However, they did little else, for the English forces under the leadership of Sir Theobald Russell of Yaverland came up and drove the French back to their ships, but in the fight Sir Theobald was killed. The next invasion of the island took place in 1377. In that year the French landed and ravaged the country far and wide, burning Yarmouth, Newport, and Newtown before being ambushed and heavily repulsed at Carisbrooke with exceedingly heavy losses, after they had attempted to take the town. The result of these invasions was disastrous to the island, for the inhabitants, always in a state of suspense fearing attack, attempted to emigrate to the mainland in large numbers, and were only

prevented by a law made against it. In 1404 the French landed once again, but they only succeeded in burning a few villages before being driven back. In 1418 they again attempted a landing, but this was unsuccessful. After the end of the Hundred Years' War there is nothing to record beyond the names of the Wardens and Governors, which lack interest, until 1485, when the Governor of the island, Sir Edward Woodville, levied 400 islanders to go with him to help the Bretons against the king of France. They set out from St. Helens: they fought against the king of France, but the Bretons were terribly defeated. The slaughter of the English was almost complete, and only one of the 400 returned to tell the tale.

But now the island began to recover from the depopulation and stagnation due to the French invasions and the emigration following them, the Wars of the Roses, plague, and the fatal expedition of Sir Edward Woodville. According to the Chronicles of the time, the population had decreased from 10,000 in the fourteenth century to no more than 1,200. It is true that the island suffered from pirates to a small degree, but nevertheless it was recovering fast. In 1545, however, during the reign of Henry VIII, the last invasion of the French took place at Bembridge. It was during the long war between the two countries that the historic attack was made. Let us quote the whole account from J. A. Froude, whose style is not easily equalled:

'The king was at Portsmouth, having gone down to review the fleet, when, on the 15th of July, 200 sail were reported at the back of the Isle of Wight. The entire force of the enemy, which had been

collected, had been safely transported across the Channel. With boats feeling the way in front with sounding-lines, they rounded St. Helens point and took up their position in a straight line which extended from Brading Harbour to Ryde. In the light evening breeze, 14 English ships stood across to reconnoitre, D'Annebault came to meet them with the galleys and there was some distant firing; but there was no intention of an engagement on either side. The English withdrew and night closed in. The morning which followed was breathlessly calm. Lisle's fleet lay all inside in the Spit, the heavy sails hanging motionless on the yards, the smoke from the chimneys of the cottages on shore rising in blue columns straight into the air. It was a morning beautiful with the beauty of an English summer and an English sea. But for the work before him, Lord Lisle would have gladly heard the West wind whistling among his shrouds; at this time he had not a galley to oppose the five and twenty D'Annebault had brought with him; and in such weather the galleys had all the advantages of the modern gunboats. From the single long gun which each of them carried in the bow they poured shot for an hour into the tall stationary hulls of the line-of-battle ships; and keeping in constant motion they were themselves in perfect security. According to the French account of the action, the "Great Harry" suffered so severely as almost to be sunk at her anchorage; and, had the calm continued, they believed that they could have destroyed the entire fleet. As the morning drew on, however, the off-shore breeze sprang up suddenly; the large ships began to glide through the water; a number of frigates—long narrow vessels—so swift

the French said, that they could outsail their fastest shallops—came out with "incredible swiftness" (Du Bellay) and the fortune of the day was changed. The enemy were afraid to turn, lest they should be run over; if they attempted to escape into the wind, they would be cut off from their own fleet. The main line advanced barely in time to save them; and the English, whose object was to draw the enemy into action under the guns of their own fortresses and among the shoals of the Spit, retired to their own ground. The loss on both sides had been insignificant; but the occasion was rendered memorable by a misfortune. The "Mary Rose", a ship of six hundred tons, and one of the finest in the navy, was among the vessels engaged with the galleys. She was commanded by Sir George Carew, and manned with a crew, who were said, all of them, to be fitter in their own conceit to order than obey, and to be incompetent for ordinary work. The ports were opened for action, the guns were run out, and, in consequence of the calm, had been imperfectly secured. The breeze rising suddenly, and the vessel heeling slightly over, the windward tier slipped across the deck, and, as she yielded further to the weight, the lee ports were depressed below the water-line, the ship instantly filled, and carried down her every soul who was on board. Almost at the same moment the French treasure-ship "La Maitresse" was also reported to be sinking. She had been strained at sea, and the shock of her own cannon completed the mischief. There was but just time to save her crew and remove the money chest when she too was disabled. She was towed to the mouth of Brading Harbour and left on the shore.

'These inglorious casualties were a feeble result of the meeting of the two largest navies which had encountered each other for centuries. The day had as yet lost but a few hours, and D'Annebault, hearing that the king was a spectator of the scene, believed he might taunt him out of his caution by landing troops on the island. The sight of the enemy taking possession of English territory, and the blaze of English villages, scarcely two cannon-shots distance from him, would provoke his patience, and the fleet would again advance. Detachments were sent on shore at three different points, which, in Du Bellay's description, are not easy to recognize. Pierre Strozzi, an Italian, attacked a fort, perhaps near Sea View, which had annoyed the galleys in the morning. The garrison abandoned it, as he approached, and it was destroyed. M. de Thais, landing without resistance, advanced into the island to reconnoitre. He went forward till he had entangled his party in a glen surrounded by thickets; and here he was checked by a shower of arrows from invisible hands. The English, few in number, but on their own ground, hovered about him, giving way when they were attacked, but hanging on his skirts, and pouring death into his ranks with their silent bows, till prudence warned him to withdraw to the open sands. The third detachment was the most considerable; it was composed of picked men, and was led by two of the most distinguished commanders of the galleys. These must have landed close to Bembridge. They were no sooner landed than they were charged by a body of cavalry. There was sharp fighting; and the soldiers in the nearest ships, excited by the spectacle of the skirmish and the rattle of the carbines, became

unmanageable, seized the boats, and went off, without their officers, to join in. The English, being now outnumbered, withdrew; the French straggled after them in loose order, till they came out upon the Downs sloping up towards the Culver cliffs; and here, being scattered in twos and threes, they were again charged with fatal effect. Many were cut in pieces; the rest fled, the English pursuing and sabreing them down to the shore; and but few would have escaped but that the disaster was perceived from the fleet; large masses of men were sent in, under shelter of the guns, to relieve the fugitives; and the English, being badly pressed in return, drew off, still fighting as they retreated, till they reached a stream (the brook at the head of Brading Harbour probably) which they crossed, and broke the bridge behind them. It was by this time evening; and the day had produced little except remarkable evidence of incapacity in the French commanders. In the morning a council of war was held. The English fleet, to avoid exposing themselves a second time to the attacks of the galleys, had withdrawn into the harbour or under the shore; and D'Annebault, confident in numbers and French daring, proposed since they would not venture out, to go in and attack them where they lay, and, if possible, carry Portsmouth. The crews, brave as lions, desired nothing better. The pilots, when consulted, declared the enterprise impracticable. In order to reach the enemy, they would have to advance up a channel which only four ships could pass abreast. They must take the flow of the tide; and the current was so violent that, if any misadventure befell the first which entered, the whole line would nevertheless be

obliged to follow, and they would all be crushed together in confusion. The admiral disbelieved in difficulties. He thought they might anchor and bombard the town. But their cables, the pilots declared, would not be strong enough to bring them up, at the rate at which they were going, or they might be cut; or the eddies, perpetually shifting the position of the ships, would lay them open to be swept by the English batteries.

'Imagining that the reluctance might arise from cowardice, D'Annebault, as soon as night fell, sent in boats with muffled oars, to try the soundings and measure the passage into the harbour. They returned with more than a confirmation of the unfavourable reports. A single ship, they stated, could only enter in experienced hands; and they had found the approaches so full of shoals and hidden sand-bars, that for a fleet to advance in the face of an enemy was, as the pilots said, an impossibility.

'It remained, therefore, to decide whether the army should land in force upon the island, and drive the English out of it, as they might easily do. They had brought with them seven thousand pioneers, who could throw up fortresses rapidly at Newport, Cowes, St. Helens, and elsewhere; and they could leave garrisons strong enough to maintain their ground against any force which the English would be able to bring against them. They would thus hold in their hands a security for Boulogne; and as the English did not dare to face their fleet in the open water, they might convert their tenure into a permanence.

'This was the course which they were intended to pursue; and it was the course which, in the opinion of Du Bellay, one of the ablest generals in France,

they indisputably ought to have pursued. In neglecting it he considered that an opportunity was wasted, the loss of which his confidence in Providence and in the destinies of France alone enabled him to forgive.

'D'Annebault, however, had received discretionary powers; and, for some unknown reason, he determined to try his fortune elsewhere. After three days of barren demonstration, the fleet weighed anchor and sailed. His misfortunes in the Isle of Wight were not yet over. The ships were in want of fresh water; and on leaving St. Helens he went round into Shanklin Bay, where he sent his boats to fill their casks at the rivulet which runs down the Chine. The stream was small, the task was tedious, and the Chevalier d'Eulx, who, with a few companies, was appointed to guard the watering parties, seeing no signs of danger, wandered inland, attended by some of his men, to the top of the high down adjoining. The English, who had been engaged with the other detachments two days before, had kept on the hills, watching the motions of the fleet. The Chevalier was caught in an ambuscade, and, after defending himself like a hero, he was killed, with most of his followers. Persecuted by small misadventures, the fleet now dropped across the opening of the Solent; the weather threatened to change; there were signs of a wind from the westward; but, uncertain of their movements, they lay for two nights between Selsea Bill and the mouth of Chichester Harbour.'

The prosperity of the island continued. It was now fairly safe from invasion, there being 2,000 men on the island for its defence, with 3,000 more on the mainland ready to cross when needed. The

population also increased, and at this time numbered 15,000. In 1588 the Spanish Armada passed within sight of the Isle of Wight, but made no attempt to land. Trade flourished, St. Helens in particular having much commerce. Cowes and Newport were important centres. About this time Carisbrooke Castle, the same site which had been the military centre for Celt and Roman, Saxon and Dane, Feudal Lord and King, was enlarged and improved once more, the area enclosed by the walls being twenty acres. Peace continued to reign with no eventful incident till we come to a later phase in the island's history, beginning with the accession of Charles I. Those were troubled times, and, because of the growing quarrel between King and Parliament, coupled with the incompetence and negligence of the Governors, the prosperity began to decay, the trade to decrease. When war broke out, affairs grew exciting on the island. The Royalists were represented in the island by the titled men and landed proprietors, while the Roundheads found numerous supporters from the lower classes and small farmers. Both sides wished to gain the isle for their party, and Carisbrooke naturally became the zone of interest. The castle was held by a very small and inefficient Royalist force, and the Roundheads, led by the Mayor of Newport, did not hesitate to attack it. However, the defenders by bluffing deceived the enemy, and were suffered to depart with the 'honours of war'. The Parliament appointed a new Governor in the person of Colonel Robert Hammond, a young man, and at one time friend of Charles I, and it was to him that, in November 1647, the unfortunate king, tired of his close confinement at Hampton Court,

fled, believing that he could win him back to his side. He was disillusioned. At first he was allowed a certain amount of liberty, but as the weeks went by his confinement was more severe; and soon he was a prisoner. He attempted to escape, but in his first attempt he failed to pass through the window, which was too small for his body. The result was that he could move neither backwards nor forwards until the morning, when he was with difficulty rescued. He made a second attempt to escape which also failed, and the king was kept in confinement at Carisbrooke until November 1648, when he was removed to the mainland.

And so, at the conclusion of the Civil War, the island enters a new phase of history. No longer do the foreign ships invade her shores; no longer do her meadows ring with the sound of battle. The population multiplied, and greatly increased trade followed. Carisbrooke Castle ceased to be any post of vital strategic value, but only remained as a memento of days long ago, and peace and prosperity reign in the place of war and terror.

THE ROMAN OCCUPATION OF THE BEMBRIDGE DISTRICT

By Edward Daws.

It was generally believed until the middle of the last century that the Romans had settled but little in the island. This opinion was based largely on the fact that until 1859 few traces of Roman occupation had been found, but it has been necessary to revise this view owing to the discovery of villas at Carisbrooke, Gurnard, and Brading, and of tiles, pottery, and coins in many other parts of the island. It can now be definitely stated that the Roman occupation of the island was considerable in extent and of long duration, and there is little doubt that excavation would reveal to us many other traces of their activities.

Yet, after all, how scanty are the remains which the first and greatest of our island conquerors have left behind them. The crumbling walls of a villa, the shattered fragments of a vase, the record of a coin —it is from such memorials that antiquaries, after careful research, piece together for us the doubtful story of their stay. Yet they ruled the island for as long a period as from the days of Elizabeth to our own, days of peace and prosperity, when the Pax Romana kept the barbarian from our shores, and enabled the native Celts to live in security, although it may have been servitude: days which must have

been regarded as a golden age during the long misery of the centuries after their departure, when no man could say what the night would bring. Ravaged by the Jutes, Danes, and later by the French, the island was not to know tranquillity such as the Romans brought for over a thousand years.

It is difficult to say how far the influence of Rome lasted after their departure from Britain in the fifth century. Was their work, their culture, the whole structure of the society they had known, swept away by the Teutonic invader? Did the barbarians who took the place of the Romans begin the organization of their life upon an entirely new basis? Or did they, as in France, recognize that the Roman villa, the Roman society, the Roman law, were something beyond their comprehension, and endeavour to adapt themselves to conditions which they dimly realized were better than any they could have themselves evolved.

This question, interesting and difficult as it is, has been often discussed, and no definite answer can be given. But it would seem scarcely possible that the whole of the work of the Romans was obliterated. The villas, it may be assumed, remained intact, they were probably occupied by the invaders, and it may even be that in some cases the organization of the villa was carried on in cruder form, and that the natives exchanged a Roman for a Teutonic master.

The facts of the Roman conquest of the island may be briefly noted. It was conquered by Vespasian, who afterwards became the great emperor and soldier, in A.D. 43. We hear little of Vectis, however, until the third century, and it is probable that there were comparatively few settlers here before that date.

Until the beginning of the fifth century, when the Roman occupation ended, the island seems to have been as much influenced by Roman art and Roman civilization as any part of Hampshire.

By far the most interesting of all the Roman remains in the neighbourhood of Bembridge is the villa at Brading, which was discovered in 1879. The villa was easily reached by Brading harbour, which then extended nearly to Sandown, and made Bembridge and Yaverland almost if not entirely an island. Before the present road between Brading and Sandown was constructed, there were traces of a way which led from the villa to the Sandown shore; and there is a local tradition of a Roman road which led from the Foreland through Centurions' Copse, where Roman remains have been found, to a point opposite the villa at Morton.

The plan of the building, which may well have been the residence of the Governor of the island, comprises three groups of apartments situated on the north, west, and south sides of a courtyard measuring 185 feet each way.

The residential part of the house was on the west side of the courtyard, and consisted of twelve rooms and a hall 50 feet long. The floor of the hall is remarkable for a wonderful mosaic pavement, which attempts to depict Orpheus charming the wild beasts with his lyre. A monkey, a fox, a peacock, and a coot are represented in the pavement as attracted by the music of Orpheus. The whole is surrounded by an elaborate border.

In the largest room of the house there is another remarkable mosaic, much of which has been unfortunately destroyed. It is obvious that in each corner

the seasons were depicted. The figure of Winter is the most perfect of all. Winter is represented as a woman, closely wrapped, her garment being fastened across her left shoulder by a brooch, and attached to her dress is a hood, similar to that worn by ecclesiastics. In her left hand she carries a leafless bough from which is suspended a dead bird.

There are many other mosaics of equal beauty, which form a curious and interesting study. Nor is it only in these extraordinary examples of floor decoration that we have proof of the care and expense lavished on this building in order to make it a joy for its occupier. No pains were spared to increase his comfort. The climate of the island, as of England, was certainly warmer and damper 2,000 years ago than now, but the Roman may well have sighed for the sunshine and heat of his native Italy. A hot air system, by which all the rooms could be effectually warmed, was furnished for the villa, and a room to the north contained arrangements for a bath.

The work of the villa was performed by the personal servants of the occupier; some of these, perhaps, were freed men, but the majority were probably slaves, members of the conquered race. The villa may have been a military centre, although Carisbrooke must always have been in a more strategic position for this purpose; in any case the work around the villa was mainly agricultural. Probably the villa was self-supporting, and this meant much hard work: the growing of crops, and the breeding of cattle; and so for two centuries the life of the Romans went on here, and the laughter of Roman boys rang out as they played knuckle-bones over the protesting figure of Orpheus, or chased one another around the quad-

rangle, or ran down the steep bank to strip and swim in the waters of the harbour. It is hard to imagine them and their life: it has gone utterly; no memory of it remains, and the barren conclusions of the archaeologists can hardly bring to our mind all the active life, full of humour and energy, and sorrow and tragedy, that must have centred around the elaborate mansion on the hill-side at Morton.

BEMBRIDGE, KING ALFRED, AND THE FIRST NAVAL BATTLE

By the Editor.

The Isle of Wight has a history of special interest in the ninth century. Towards the end of this century Alfred was reigning over the south of England. The Danes overran much of the other part of the country. Alfred was responsible for the inception of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and probably wrote a considerable part of this Chronicle himself. It is the most important historical document which we have. There are numerous references to the Isle of Wight in the Chronicle. Many of them relate to the movements of Alfred's ships and to those of the enemy. The most interesting of all the references is one which closely affects Bembridge, and is a description of what may be called the first English naval battle, in the year A.D. 896.

Pirate ships were constantly appearing off the coast, and in order to deal with these Alfred turned shipbuilder.

Alfred did not content himself with merely copying the Danish ships. He enlisted Frisian sailors in his service, for they were noted for their skilful seamanship. He built ships twice as long and higher than the Danish boats, which were called ashes, as they were built of the wood of the ash-tree. Some had

sixty oars, some more; and they were both swifter and steadier than the Danish ships.

The first British naval battle is described with much detail in the Chronicle (A. D. 896). The pirate fleet had been plundering along the south coast, and had taken refuge in some land-locked harbour of the Isle of Wight. Although the Chronicle does not mention the name of the harbour, it is clear that Brading Harbour is referred to. The conditions described could be found in no other harbour in the island, and the engagement took place off Bembridge.

The Danes were besieged in the harbour by nine of Alfred's new ships, which entered the harbour and vigorously attacked the Danish boats. So long as the tide was high, King Alfred's men, being far superior in numbers, were completely victorious, but as the tide ebbed their bigger boats were left 'very inconveniently' aground, and they were unable to manœuvre. At low water the Danes clambered out of their boats, and challenged a fight with the crews of the three English ships which lay nearest to them. The fight was a bitter one. The little harbour has witnessed many stirring scenes: often the flames of burning houses fired by French raiders have illuminated its waters; often has an English fleet set sail for distant seas from its sheltered waters; but probably it has never seen so stirring or strange an encounter. One hundred and twenty Danes fell, and sixty-two English. Many of the latter were men of importance; a king's reeve and a king's companion were killed, and many of the mercenary Frisian sailors.

Before the battle was decided the tide turned, and soon the shores which had lately witnessed the fight were covered with the incoming waters. One by

one the boats righted themselves and were once more afloat; first of all the small Danish boats and then the larger Saxon vessels; but when the latter were once more able to manœuvre, their enemy had fled. But the Danish boats were damaged in the encounter, and two of them were wrecked before they had passed the cliffs of Beachy Head. The crews were captured and brought to Winchester, the Saxon capital. Here they were led before King Alfred, who ordered them to be hanged, an unusual decision, for the king was usually merciful.

The third ship escaped, and eventually landed her men on the East Anglian coast.

WHITECLIFF BAY, BEMBRIDGE, ISLE OF WIGHT

Bembridge School is seen to the left

From a painting by Sidney Carter

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THE PHYSICAL HISTORY OF YAR ISLAND

By Ronald C. Muirhead.

The small eastern extremity of the Isle of Wight, known as Yar Island, or Bembridge Island (as it is called in the older maps), is separated from the rest of the Isle of Wight by Bembridge Harbour, Brading Marshes (reclaimed from the harbour), and the river Yar. Small as it is, it forms a most interesting unit for the geologist to study, as it is practically an epitome of the physical history of the Isle of Wight, and hence of the south-east of England. What is in most places on the mainland spread out over a wide expanse of country is here (owing to the great inclination of the strata) compressed within a few miles. In a stretch of coast only two miles in length may be found all the beds of rock that occur in the Isle of Wight with one exception, the Hamstead Beds, and even these may be found just north of Brading on the other side of the river Yar. Furthermore the beds come out to the coast in the form of fairly high cliffs that present natural sections which are very easily examined, and which unfold the continuous physical history of the island and explain its present form and scenery.

The dominant physical feature of the whole of Yar Island is Bembridge Down and its termination in the headland known as Culver Cliff. On either side of Culver the coast has been worn back into wide sweeping bays, Whitecliff Bay to the north

and Sandown Bay to the south. Looking on to Culver it is seen to be a towering cliff, 250 feet high, composed of chalk that shines out dazzlingly white in the sunlight. In Sandown Bay the cliffs get lower and lower until the marshes that separate Yar Island from the rest of the island are reached. These marshes are only saved by an embankment from being flooded by the sea. This stretch of coast is composed of rocks, all of which are older than the chalk. In Whitecliff Bay, on the other hand, the rocks are all newer than the chalk. In some ways it is simpler to say that the geological formations of Yar Island are progressively newer from south to north—from Sandown to the Foreland—but the chalk is such an outstanding feature of the landscape, and marks such a clear epoch in the geological history of the country, that it is more important to realize that the rocks south of Culver are older than the chalk, while those to the north are newer. Expressed in geological terms, Yar Island presents a practically complete series of formations from the Wealden in the Lower Cretaceous system, through the Upper Cretaceous and Eocene, to the Bembridge Beds in the Oligocene system, together with Gravels and Alluvium of more recent periods. And all this in an island whose greatest length is $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles!

On the opposite page, arranged in chronological order, with the oldest at the bottom, is a list of the beds which appear.

The first fact to observe is that all these beds are of stratified rocks, that is, rocks that have been laid down as sediments in water. From this it follows that the beds were once horizontal—or nearly so. Beginning with the most ancient, the Wealden Beds,

and continuing to the most recent, the Alluvium, the beds were laid down one above the other in orderly

	System of Rocks. Period of time.	*Series of Rocks. Epochs of time.*	*Locality.*
Quaternary	Recent or Holocene	Blown Sand	The Dover (St. Helens)
		Alluvium	Brading and Sandown Marshes
	Pleistocene	Plateau Gravel	The Foreland
Tertiary or Cainozoic	Pliocene	. . .	Absent
	Miocene	. . .	,,
	Oligocene	Bembridge Beds	
		Osborne Beds	
		Headon Beds	
	Eocene	Barton Beds	
		Bracklesham Beds	Whitecliff Bay
		Bagshot Sands	
		London Clay	
		Reading Beds	
Secondary or Mesozoic	Upper Cretaceous	Chalk	Culver Cliff
		Upper Greensand	
		Gault	
	Lower Cretaceous	Lower Greensand	Sandown Bay
		Wealden Beds	

sequence. (This is illustrated in Fig. 1.)

The second fact to notice is the nature of the rocks, which are varied in character, and so indicate their

being laid down under varying conditions. Some are fine clays, some sands, others limestones; some were laid down in rivers, some in estuaries, some in shallow seas, some in deep oceans, others again in vast fresh-water lakes. These variations have been brought about by movements of the crust of the Earth, which, firm and solid though it be, is subject, and was in the past much more subject, to elevation and subsidence, as though it were the chest of a mighty giant rising and falling as he breathes. This can be deduced both from the nature of the rocks themselves

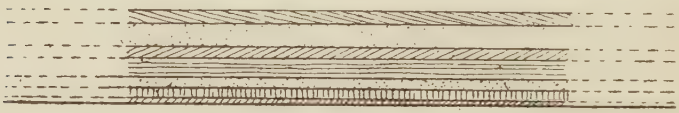


Figure 1.

Diagram to Illustrate the Original Horizontal Bedding of Stratified Rocks.

and, more particularly, from the kind of fossils that they contain.

The third fact to notice is that these beds are no longer as they were when first deposited, but are now tilted at angles varying from horizontal to vertical. At Sandown the Wealden Beds are for a short space horizontal. From here the strata gradually dip down until at Culver they are at an angle of about 70°. In Whitecliff Bay the angle of inclination increases until many of the beds are vertical and some even thrust over to about 95°. Then the angle reverts to 90°, and in the Bembridge Beds the strata curve down until at the Foreland they are quite horizontal. This

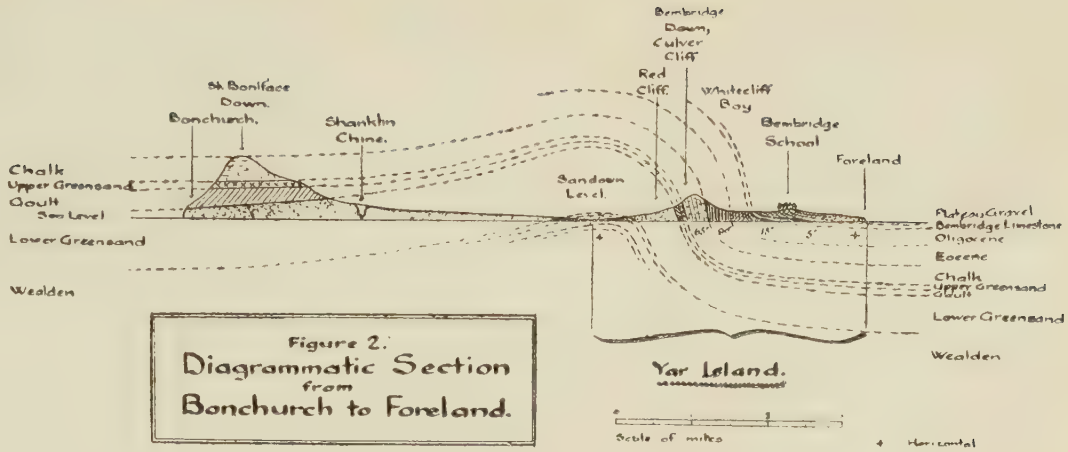


Figure 2.

Diagrammatic Section from Bonchurch to Foreland.

goes to show that, after these beds had been formed, vast earth movements took place, resulting in a great upheaval, the axis of which stretched east and west of Sandown. The horizontal strata were thrust up into a great wave-form the shape of which can be reconstructed from an examination of the existing sections (see Fig. 2). The form of this curve is most interesting. Had the pressure been merely from below, the curve would have been symmetrical (as

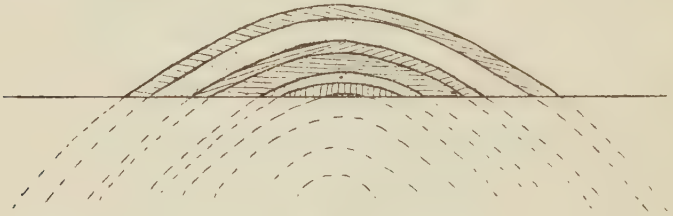


Figure 3.

Diagram to Illustrate the Curvature Of the Strata When the Pressure is Directly Below

in Fig. 3). But the actual curve is thrust over from south to north in the form of a wave just before it breaks on the shore, showing that the pressure came from the south (see Fig. 2). This is important, because it explains the change in the inclination of the strata from horizontal at Sandown, to vertical at Whitecliff Bay, and to horizontal again at the Foreland. It also explains the very rapid succession of beds in so short a distance. The crest of this wave has been planed off by weathering so that the curve is not now continuous, and the footpath along the cliff top traverses the uptilted and cut edges of the various beds.

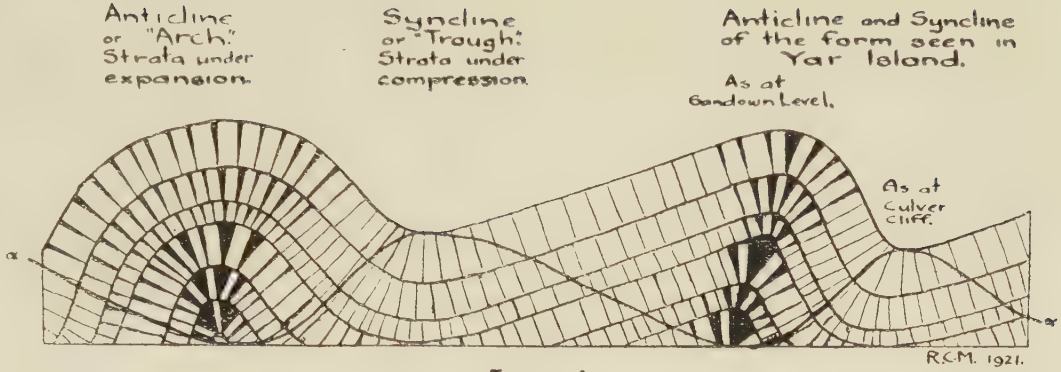

Anticline or "Arch." Strata under expansion.
Syncline or "Trough." Strata under compression.
Anticline and Syncline of the form seen in Yar Island.
As at Gandown Level.
As at Culver Cliff.
a
a
R.C.M. 1921.

Figure 4

Diagram to illustrate the more rapid denudation of Anticlines than Synclines.

a — a Line showing the form of the land after denudation

The present form of the island is the result of these great earth movements and the subsequent denudation by the sea and weathering; so that in following the physical history of Yar Island we must begin, as it were, with a clean slate from which we have wiped out all our knowledge of its present form and condition. In following this geological history we shall therefore begin with the oldest beds and describe them in sequence until we reach the newest, and, as we have seen, this will mean beginning at Sandown at the southern extremity of the island, and proceeding northwards to Bembridge Foreland.

The Wealden Beds.

As the land at Sandown Marshes is practically at sea-level, the Wealden Beds are not at first seen as a cliff-section, and, in fact, are not usually seen at all. After severe storms the pebbles of the beach are sometimes completely washed away, disclosing the underlying red, purple, and grey, variegated Wealden Clays. At first they lie horizontally, but gradually the dip increases towards the north. We know that wherever these clays are found, whether it be as part of the land or under the bed of the sea, there existed during the Wealden epoch a vast shallow lake. Into this, from a land that stretched away to the north, rivers poured their silt-laden waters. As the current became slower the silt sank to the bottom of the lake, and it is this silt, consolidated, that forms the Wealden Clays. The Earth's crust was slowly sinking, so that the clays continued to be deposited in the same place for a very long time, resulting in beds 80 feet thick. Sometimes, too, the sinking caused the sea to flow in,

and in the estuary or shallow sea so formed there lived shell-fish, whose existence is known by the occasional bands of sea-shells between the fresh-water clays. The fossils of these clays are all of fresh-water or land origin, and largely consist of drift-wood, leaves, and fir cones brought down by the rivers from sub-tropical forests and converted into lignite or brown coal. Other fossils consist of the spines and bones of fish, and shells of land and fresh-water molluscs. Sometimes, too, large tracts of the lake dried up, and over the mud flat thus caused the gigantic terrestrial reptiles of the time wandered, so that their footprints are found in the clay. The most common of these monsters was the Iguanodon (30 feet long), and his bones, water-worn through being drifted down to the bed of the lake, are found in the Wealden Clays between Sandown and Yaverland.

It must be remembered, too, that the story of these immense reptiles, and of the times in which they lived, has all been reconstructed from a study of geology: the study of the rocks of the Earth's crust. Man did not appear on the Earth until millions of years afterwards. During the Wealden epoch there were no birds, and none of the familiar mammals of to-day, but only the more primitive mammals. On the other hand the waters swarmed with life, and in the struggle for existence insects, reptiles, and many strange forms between reptiles and birds had been evolved.

The Upper Beds of this series have a thickness of 170 feet. They are known as the Wealden Shales, and denote a change in the conditions of deposition. The bed of the lake slowly sank so that the water became deeper and sea-water flowed in, with the result that the fossils found are of shell-fish that

inhabited estuaries, together with reptilian bones and other remains, washed down from the land.

Lower Greensand.

The ancient land to the north continued to sink and the Wealden lake or estuary sank with it, so that what was later to become Yar Island was during this epoch a shallow sea, although the land was never very distant, as is shown by the nature of the deposits. These are superimposed upon the Wealden Shales and chiefly consist of alternating beds of sand and clay to a depth of 617 feet. The most characteristic beds are those of a rather coarse sea-sand deeply stained yellow, brown, or red by iron. They are named Greensand from the presence of grains of glauconite which often give them a greenish tinge where not iron-stained. In Sandown Bay they form the very imposing Redcliff, that stands out so beautifully against the white background of Culver Cliff. The fossil shells are all of marine origin, but there are in addition some remains of plants and of the Iguanodon. These were drifted down from the land, or they may be 'derived fossils' due to the erosion of the top surface of the Wealden Beds.

The Gault.

The height of the cliffs steadily increases as Sandown is left behind, and the great wall-like Redcliff is succeeded by a gully that has been worn back in a bed of firm blue clay known as the Gault. At the same time the angle of inclination has gradually increased. The beds contain many fossils, all of which are of marine origin, and these, together with the fact that

the clays are of very fine particles that would have been carried farther out to sea than sand grains, show that the sea-bed continued to be depressed and the land to retreat. The Gault is one of those clays known locally as Blue Slipper on account of its propensity to cause landslips on its moist surface.

The Upper Greensand.

To the north of the Gault is the Upper Greensand, which forms a bed similar to the Lower Greensand in character, but much thinner (here only 98 feet thick), and dipping down at a greater angle (55°). A typical sea-beach has its material arranged in the order of the coarseness of its particles. At the cliff edge are boulders and very large pebbles. These are followed by smaller pebbles, by shingle, by sand, and, much deeper out to sea, by the fine silt that becomes clay. Now the Upper Greensand is of coarser material than the Gault Clay upon which it is superimposed; in other words, during the Upper Greensand epoch this site was nearer to the land than it was during the Gault epoch. Thus we infer that the old land surface to the north was rising once again, and its oscillations are faithfully recorded by the succession of Lower Greensand, Gault, and Upper Greensand. It is interesting to notice that the most primitive British birds lived during this epoch. Their mouths were full of teeth, which fact helps to prove their evolution from the earlier flying reptiles. Inland the Upper Greensand gives rise to ridge-like hills that run parallel to the Chalk Downs, and are so steep for cultivation that they remain covered with copses. In Yar Island these may be seen near Yaverland just where the road turns off to Brading.

The Chalk.

We have now reached the most important beds of the island; beds without which it would present a very different configuration. Bembridge Down forms the backbone of Yar Island and reaches 350 feet above sea-level. It ends eastward in the massive headland of Culver Cliff which juts out between Sandown Bay and Whitecliff Bay, which have been scooped out of the more easily denuded beds on either side. The whiteness of the chalk is varied and beautified by pale tints of orange, red, and green due to minute plants. The strata are 1,423 feet in thickness and have been upheaved to an angle of 65°.

At the time that this chalk was formed, many millions of years ago, the site of Yar Island was a small part of the bed of a vast ocean that stretched right across Europe to Southern Russia. In this ocean there lived, much as there live in the depths of the Atlantic Ocean to-day, the microscopic animals such as the Foraminifera whose limy skeletons settled to the ocean bed and formed chalk. Embedded in the chalk there are found the fossils of larger animals such as Sea Urchins, Star-fish, Cuttle-fish, and a very large number of marine Shell-fish.

The chalk is divided into three stages, the Lower, Middle, and Upper Chalk, partly on account of differences in the rock itself and partly because of differences in the typical fossils.

The Lower Chalk was deposited upon the Upper Greensand, and at first is seen to be mixed with much earthy matter. The sea-bed was slowly sinking but was not yet beyond the reach of the sediments brought down from the land whose denudation had provided the material for the formation of the pre-

cretaceous beds. At Culver the Lower Chalk is 210 feet in thickness. Bluish-grey marls were gradually followed by grey chalk as the bed deepened and the land retired. The Middle Chalk is 194 feet thick and generally white. In the uppermost strata a few flints are found, but they are rare.

The Upper Chalk is much freer from earthy matter, and is typically a clean white carbonate of lime through which run very regular lines of flint which show the dip of the strata very clearly. The thickness of the beds in this third stage is 1,019 feet, and gives some indication of the millions of years that must have been necessary for the formation of chalk from the slow accretion of animal 'skeletons'.

The Reading Beds.

The physical history of Yar Island is now continued in the rocks of Whitecliff Bay, but unfortunately one or two 'paragraphs' of the story have been lost. In other words there is a break in the record between the Chalk and the Reading Beds. After the deposition of the Chalk had ceased, the bed of the ocean was uplifted and the top surface eroded, so that we have no knowledge of how long elapsed before the Reading Beds were superimposed upon the worn surface. These new beds are markedly different from those that precede them, and commence a new era—the Tertiary.

The Reading Beds are composed for the most part of bright red, purple, and grey plastic clays that at high tide on a rough day often tint the sea for half a mile. Their basement bed, however, is usually of iron-stained sand containing flints and flint-pebbles

evidently derived from the eroded Chalk. During this epoch the Chalk Ocean had here given place to a shallow sea bordering a continent, and in this sea the clays were laid down. Fossils are practically absent.

The London Clay.

The beginning of the London Clay is clearly marked by a stratum of sandstone, 2 feet thick, containing rounded pebbles both of flint and of hardened red clay. This latter would appear to have been derived from the Reading Beds, which are hence shown to have suffered some erosion before the deposition of the London Clay. The bulk of the strata consist of blue and brown clays interspersed with grey and yellow sands. They were laid down in a sea that varied in depth and in which lived sharks and shell-fish such as are now found in the seas to the south of Asia. Land was near, for the fossil remains are found of many plants similar to those of Asia, e.g. Banana, Ginger, Palm, Ebony, Melon, Apple, Almond, Plum, the Lotus, Cypress, Pine, Yew, Maple, Oak, Hazel, and Walnut. The beds are 322 feet thick and almost upright. The fossils are not well preserved except in the concretionary beds.

Bagshot Sands.

These form a lofty peak of bright yellow sand at an angle of 90°. They are 138 feet thick, and near their base have become cemented with iron into a deep red ferruginous sandstone that forms a prominent reef extending right down the beach. The Bagshot Sands yield large masses of pipe-clay in which have been

left most beautiful fossil leaves that show that the same plants lived as in the London Clay epoch, but with some new ones, such as the Beech, Elm, Fig, Bread Fruit, Willow, Poplar, Olive, Ash, Convolvulus, Bilberry, White Water Lily, Holly, and Vine. Evidently land was near and the conditions were those of a shallow sea, or lagoon, of brackish water.

The Bracklesham Beds.

The alternations of sands and sandy clays during this epoch record changes in the level of the sea-bed and land. Most of the strata of the Bracklesham series were laid down in a sea which contained sharks, many of whose teeth are found as fossils. In this sea, too, lived myriads of shell-fish ; and fossils of the large Cockle (*Cardita planicosta*) and the tiny Oyster (*Ostrea flabellula*) are very easily obtained. There is a most interesting seam of brown coal, or lignite, 3 feet in thickness, that shows that there was land here, or possibly a salt marsh, in which grew the plants whose carbonized remains form the coal. It does not make good fuel for it gives out a sulphurous odour and leaves a very large proportion of ash. The plant remains of the Bracklesham epoch in various places have been found to include the Fern, Palm, Cactus, Eucalyptus, and Fig. Many of the Clay Beds are of a greenish colour, due to the presence of glauconite.

Barton Beds.

In Whitecliff Bay the Lower Barton Beds are difficult to examine as they are hidden by landslips. Moreover they differ in lithographical character very little from the preceding beds, and therefore the boundary is difficult to discover. The division is deter-

mined by changes in the fossils. Both beds contain very large numbers of small coin-like shells called Nummulites (from Latin, *nummus*, a coin). In the Lower Bracklesham Beds *Nummulites laevigatus* is common, in the Upper Beds *Nummulites variolarius*; but it is the advent of a new species, *Nummulites elegans*, that marks the change to the Barton epoch. The Lower and Middle Beds are of clay with many fossils, very like the shells now found in the seas between Malaysia and New Zealand, and indicate a depression of the sea-bed. The Upper Beds include the Barton Sands, formerly known as the Headon Hill Sands, and sometimes as the Glasshouse Sands, for, owing to their purity, they were formerly dug and taken to the mainland for the manufacture of glass. They contain practically no fossils, and mark a rise in the sea-bed on which they were deposited as a shoal.

Headon Beds.

With the Barton Sands the first system of the Tertiary rocks (the Eocene) which began with the Reading Beds comes to an end. These are called Eocene from two Greek words (*Æos* = dawn, and *kainos* = recent), because they contain the dawn of the modern species of molluscs. The succeeding system is known as the Oligocene (Greek, *oligos* = a few), and contains a few of the modern species. In Whitecliff Bay the Eocene are nearly all of marine origin, while the Oligocene are principally fresh-water deposits. The Hampshire basin is the only part of England where the Oligocene Beds are found. The first of these are the Headon Beds. The floor of the shallow sea was elevated until in this epoch dry land

appeared. Through this land there flowed great rivers which spread out over the hollows to form broad lakes. In these the matter worn off the higher lands was deposited in the form of clays, sands, and marls. In them, too, were formed fresh-water limestones.

The Lower Headon Beds are of fresh-water and estuarine origin and contain many fossils. Then a depression took place and in the Middle Headon epoch sea-water flowed in, and as the salinity of the water changed the species of shell-fish changed, until they were of entirely marine types such as oysters. Again the sea-floor rose until in the Upper Beds we find a return to brackish and then to fresh-water conditions and corresponding changes in the very numerous fossils. The Headon Beds have a total thickness of 212 feet and their dip is about 80°.

The Osborne Beds.

The commencement of the Osborne Beds is marked by the grassy path to the top of the cliff. The section is obscured by slips and vegetation, but the pale red and green marls and the creamy-yellow limestone may be seen in one or two places. The beds are 80 feet in thickness, and were chiefly deposited in brackish water lagoons which were the haunt of turtles and alligators.

The Bembridge Beds.

The lowest beds of the Bembridge series are the Bembridge Limestones, which form a beautiful creamy-white cliff. There are several strata of hard stone separated by bands of clay and marl, the total thickness being about 23 feet. At first they dip down in

a quick curve, but that soon gives place to a gentler slope of about 15° to 5°, and then they come gradually down to sea-level and form the long horizontal reef known as Long Ledge that terminates Whitecliff Bay. A conspicuous feature of the bay are the large boulders that lie at the foot of the cliffs where they have broken away from the Bembridge Limestone as the underlying Osborne Clays were washed out. These limestones are all of fresh-water origin and were formed in vast shallow lakes chiefly by the agency of a little water-plant called Charra, whose seed-vessels, about the size of a mustard-seed, are a common fossil. This plant precipitates carbonate of lime by absorbing carbon dioxide from water charged with carbonate of lime. The limestones are full of fossils of fresh-water molluscs and of land-shells, such as snails, which were washed into the lake. The Bembridge Limestone has been much used as a building stone, and during the Middle Ages was quarried for the construction of Winchester Cathedral. Nearly all the old farm-houses and cottages of Yar Island are built of it, and its creamy colour and rugged texture are very beautiful. The walls of the lower storey of the older part of Bembridge School are made of it, and fresh-water fossils may be seen in them. (The upper storey is largely built of chalk protected by rough-cast.) Above the Limestones are the Bembridge Marls, some of which were deposited in fresh water and some in the brackish water of estuaries or lagoons. At first actual marine conditions prevailed, as is shown by the bed of *Ostrea vectensis* (Isle of Wight oyster). A little higher in the series is a thin band of bluish limestone known as the 'Insect Bed', as farther to the west of the Isle of

Wight the corresponding bed produced fossils of beetles, flies, locusts, ants, &c. Fossil remains of the fish and turtles that once lived in the lagoons are fairly common. Rounding the point of Whitecliff Bay we find that these beds come down in succession to the sea-level, and fossils are easily obtained from the almost level ledge that they form. With the Bembridge Beds the Oligocene Period comes to an end, for the uppermost beds of the Oligocene, the Hamstead, are absent in Yar Island. The land at this period had a sub-tropical climate, and the vegetation consisted of Palms, Conifers, Spindle-trees, Oaks, Laurels, and Vines. Among the mammals the tapir and hippopotamus lived here during this period.

The Miocene Period.

There are no beds of rock in England that belong to the Miocene Period, but it has nevertheless left its mark very plainly upon our landscape. As we have seen, the rocks of Sandown and Whitecliff Bays were laid down horizontally during the Cretaceous, Eocene, and Oligocene Periods. It was during the Miocene Period that there took place the great folding of the Earth's crust that resulted in these beds being upheaved in the great wave-form shown in Fig. 2. So great was the pressure that the crest of the wave was nearly 5,000 feet above the trough. Following the upheaval the forces of denudation set to work to wear it all down again. The rain trickled down the slopes, carrying with it particles of earth. These found their way into rivers that developed and flowed northwards until they reached the 'trough'. The Eastern Yar is one of these rivers, and it is interesting to note that its estuary, that is, Bembridge Harbour, occupies

a subsidiary trough, for the Bembridge Limestone can be seen both on the Bembridge and St. Helens sides dipping down under the harbour. In the trough they were collected together by a river flowing eastward and now spoken of as the river Solent. And here we notice a curious paradox. The place over which the crest of the wave was situated, namely, Sandown Level, is now just that part of our district that is lowest, but, like all other curiosities of nature, it is simply the result of the working of natural laws. When strata are bent the convex curve will be subjected to expansion, while the concave curve will be under compression; the convex surface will be very easily 'weathered', or worn away by the agency of the weather, while the concave surface will resist weathering. This is illustrated in Fig. 4.

During the Miocene and Pliocene Periods this erosion went on, so that we find a great stratigraphical break between the Bembridge Beds and those that were superimposed upon them in the succeeding Pleistocene Period.

The Plateau Gravels.

Midway between Bembridge Point and Whitecliff Bay stands Knowles Windmill on a steep gravelly hill that rises abruptly from Brading Marshes. This gravel, known as the Plateau Gravel, will be found to consist chiefly of flints, but to include, in addition, pebbles of Chert, and Upper and Lower Greensand. As these latter rocks are only found below the Chalk they must have been transported from south of Bembridge and Brading Downs either by the river Yar or else by the old Solent River, and deposited in their present position as the force of the current abated.

A very much larger patch of this gravel occupies the whole northern end of Yar Island. Passing along the cliffs north-east from Whitecliff Bay, the Bembridge Marls continue as far as Howe Chine, where they are succeeded by a patch of brick-earth that extends as far as the brickyard in Howe Gate lane. Onwards until we reach the Foreland we find tall cliffs made of vast masses of gravel of the same kind as the Plateau Gravels. The material varies in size from small shingle to pebbles the size of a man's head. The cliffs weather quite perpendicularly, are stratified, and have a dip of about 4° to the north-east. They form a splendid example of a raised beach and would appear to have been thrown up against a hidden cliff of the Bembridge Marls and then to have been raised by the elevation of the land. This shingle continues round the north-east of Yar Island to Bembridge Point.

We have now reached beds that are geologically quite recent, for during the Pleistocene Period man appeared on the earth, and—more interesting to us—appeared on Yar Island. This we know, for among the Plateau Gravels are found flints which have been worked by man to form his palaeoliths, or old Stone-Age flint implements. The first palaeolith of which there is any record in the Isle of Wight was found near Howe Gate, and similar ones are still to be found between that place and the Foreland.

Alluvium.

The whole of the western boundary of Yar Island is formed by the river Yar and Sandown Level, and all this valley is filled in with alluvium, that is, the deposits of silt brought down by the river. The

cutting off of the so-called Yar Island has been effected by this river which, in cutting down its valley, severed Bembridge Down from Brading Down.

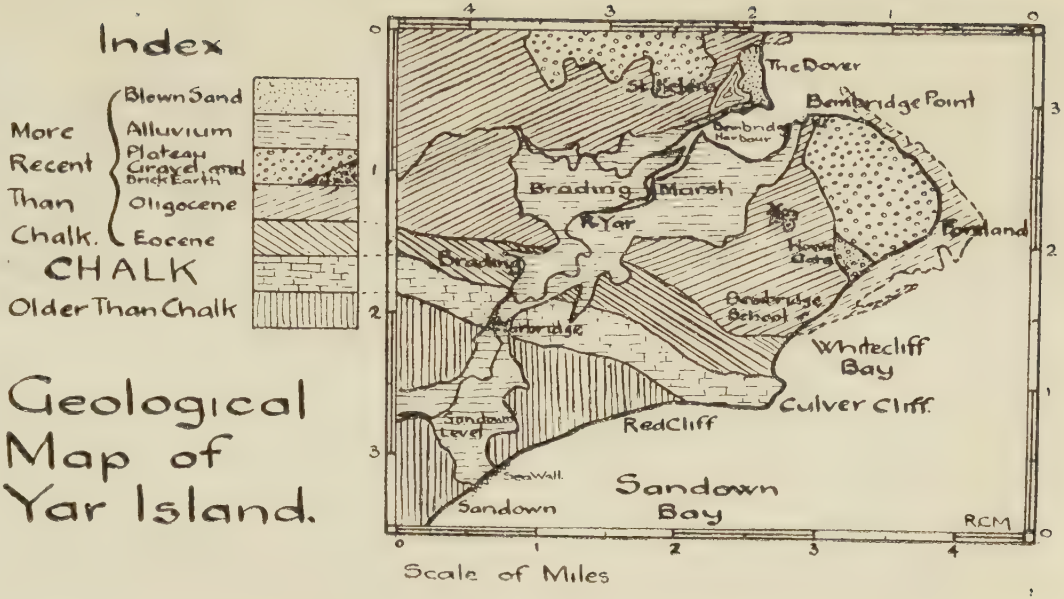
The most interesting part of this alluvial tract is Sandown Level between the sea-coast at Sandown and the river Yar which there comes from the east. The alluvium here is just as wide and deep as in the Yar Valley, and was evidently laid down by a tributary of the Yar coming from the south and joining it just south of Yarbridge. The encroachment of the sea into Sandown Bay has decapitated this old tributary, leaving only the alluvium and valley of Sandown Level to tell of its former existence. Were it not for the sea-wall this alluvium would easily fall a prey to the ravages of the sea. The decapitation of the river Yar, and the joining up of the sea with the old Brading Harbour that would follow, would cause Yar Island to become an island in fact as well as in name.

Blown Sand.

The most recent of all the beds is the Blown Sand, a spit of which juts out into Bembridge Harbour from the St. Helens side and is known as the Dover. This forms a typical sand-dune and has been piled up by the prevailing westerly winds. The spit of sand at Bembridge Point is similar, although very much smaller.

Present Changes.

We have at last reached the most recent of the strata of Yar Island, but we have by no means come to an end of its physical history. That history we have seen to be one of continuous change—change that is going on now just as it went on in the past.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Slowly but surely, there is going on the twofold process of building up and wearing down.

The reefs that stand out in front of Culver and the Foreland bear eloquent testimony to the encroachment of the sea. This is again very clearly seen in the shape of Sandown and Whitecliff Bays, and in the fact that after stormy high-tides the sea is richly tinted by the materials it has washed away from the cliff-edge. Rain, frost, and sun are even more active agents in this denudation. In this connexion it is interesting to notice the sculpturing of the landscape in Whitecliff Bay. As has been shown, the Eocene rocks are here alternations of vertical sands and clays. Now it would seem at first sight that the loosely compacted, easily disintegrated sands would be more rapidly removed by the agencies of weathering than the heavy and compact clays. But this is not so. In all cases it will be seen that the sands stand up nearly perpendicularly while the clays have been worn back into chines or comparatively gently-sloping cliffs. The reason for this is that rain is not the chief disintegrating agent. The clays are naturally moist, and when their surface is exposed, the sun and wind extract the moisture which, on a hot day, can actually be seen rising as delicate clouds of vapour. Thus dried up, the outer layer shrinks, cracks, and peels off from the underlying, and still moist, clay. Consequently when sitting at the foot of a clay cliff on a sunny day, one is often made aware of a constant avalanche of particles of this clay rolling down and forming a scree (or bank of loose, broken material) at the bottom. In this way fresh surfaces are constantly being presented to the sun, dried, cracked, and peeled off. Then when the rain comes there is an abun-

dance of loose, easily transportable matter ready to be carried away down to the sea. Here, being composed of very fine particles, they are kept buoyed up so long as they are in currents of the sea, and only settle down to the bottom when they have been carried out into deep, or otherwise quiet, waters. Settling down at last they form new beds of clay that one day may be up-heaved and form new land, only, in its turn, to be worn away and re-deposited elsewhere.

The sand cliffs, on the other hand, are naturally dry, because being porous, water quickly soaks through them. On them, therefore, the sun can have little effect, and so denudation is dependent chiefly upon the rain acting alone. But even this is not so effective as when it is acting upon the clay, because the very absorbent nature of the sand causes much of the rain to sink in, rather than run over its surface and carry away the particles. The sand that does get washed away is composed of grains that are individually much coarser and heavier than the particles of clay. A comparatively rapid current is therefore necessary to keep them in suspension, and so they are deposited much sooner than the clays. They may be seen as the sands that are uncovered at low-tide. Notice, too, that where, as in Whitecliff Bay, many different beds of sand crop out close to one another, they will be mixed together in the sand of the new sea-bed.

The building-up process is also typified in Yar Island in at least three different ways. First, we notice the deposition of alluvium in the lower courses of river beds. This is seen in the silting-up of Brading Harbour by the river Yar. Secondly, we have the formation of sand-dunes, such as the Dover, by the

action of the wind. Thirdly, we have pebble-beaches, thrown up by tidal currents, which may be so high and so undisturbed as to become covered with vegetation and eventually dry land. Part of Bembridge Point would seem to be an example of this.

Here we must leave the Physical History of Yar Island to continue its story of change throughout all Eternity, remembering as we do so that it is but a tiny spot on that

> Great wide, beautiful, wonderful world,
> With the wonderful water round you curled,

of which the poet W. B. Rands wrote. Other places have their equally absorbing tales to tell—tales in some cases of the very dawn of life on the Earth and of rocks many millions of years older than any that we can see here. But each place has its own particular interest, and while Yar Island is comparatively recent, it is, nevertheless, one of the few spots in the British Isles where the Oligocene rocks occur.

Those who wish to follow this history in greater detail will do well to study the *Memoir of the Geology of the Isle of Wight*, published by the Geological Survey Office, but, still more important, they should go out to the actual cliffs and attempt to read 'the riddle of the rocks' for themselves. The value and fascination of such original research has never been better expressed than by Longfellow when he wrote of Agassiz:

> And Nature, the old nurse, took
> The child upon her knee,
> Saying: "Here is a story-book
> Thy Father has written for thee."

"Come, wander with me," she said,
"Into regions yet untrod;
And read what is still unread
In the manuscripts of God."

And he wandered away and away
With Nature, the dear old nurse,
Who sang to him night and day
The rhymes of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long,
Or his heart began to fail,
She would sing a more wonderful song,
Or tell a more marvellous tale.

WOLVERTON AND ITS LEGEND

By D. M. Foot.

A few moss-covered banks and stones are the sole visible remains of the village of Wolverton, sacked in 1340 by a band of French marauders.

A curious legend is connected with the fall of Wolverton. A fountain, the water of which was supposed to have magical properties, is said to have existed. On a cross near by the following words were inscribed:

> While the oose flows pure and free,
> Burg and tune shall happy bee,
> The net bee heavy in the sea,
> And wheaten seed shall yield plentie.
>
> When sained blood in the burn shall well
> It shall light a flame so hot and snell
> Shall fire the burg from lock to fell,
> Nor sheeling bide its place to tell,
> And Colvert's Nass shall ring its knell.

A few years before the sack of Wolverton a pedlar had come to the town, and had been noted for the cheapness of his wares; he had reappeared at intervals and had always departed in the direction of Culver Cliff. Attempts were made to follow him, but he contrived to elude his pursuers, and his residence was never discovered. The Hermit of the Cliff, for so he came to be called, had an uncanny knowledge of

every one's grievances, real or imaginary, and never failed to urge them to seek redress by spiteful or even criminal methods. In spite of this, his character was regarded by most as unimpeachable, for he was ever ready to alleviate distress by any means in his power.

His visits to the town became more numerous as time went on; he was for ever warning them against the mischievous propensities of a certain old man in a grey cowl, who, he said, was responsible for the misfortunes of all in the district, but whom nobody had ever seen. One day he informed the town that this mysterious enemy was coming at eventide to poison the holy well. Accordingly, a large crowd assembled at dusk, and great was the excitement when in the distance an old man in a grey cloak and cowl was perceived. He advanced slowly up the road, and taking no notice of the onlookers sat down on the edge of the well. A bystander, fearing that he was about to defile the water as the Hermit had predicted, threw a stone. It struck the old man on the head, killing him. He fell forwards and his blood dripped into the well. At this moment a friar who lived in the district came upon the scene. As soon as he saw the body, he uttered a cry of horror, and informed his hearers that this was a great saint, and by murdering him they had defiled the water; Wolverton was doomed. As, however, the town did not immediately burst into flames, the inhabitants recovered somewhat from their fright and began to look about for the Hermit. He had disappeared.

Next day he was treated, as may be imagined, with some coldness. A young fisherman named Edgar was invited by him to spend the evening at his home. He led his guest to the edge of Colvert's Nass, an

overhanging ledge at the top of Culver Cliff. There he stamped on the ground, which opened, and a stairway was revealed. They descended, and Edgar found himself in a huge cavern cut in the chalk. A number of curious dwarfs appeared, followed by eleven or twelve beautiful damsels, one of whom paid marked attention to the young fisherman. He noticed, however, that two of the dwarfs had begun to fight in a corner, and saw with horror that each had a great black tail which had previously been concealed by a short kilt or petticoat which they wore.

At supper, before beginning to eat, he stood up and, in accordance with his habit, repeated a Latin Grace. As he proceeded, the cavern grew darker and darker, and at the last word a roar like a thunderclap was heard. Edgar sank down unconscious.

A small cave, still known as the Hermit's Hole, may be seen in the face of Culver Cliff, though the path to it has disappeared in recent years. It was here that Edgar recovered consciousness. Colvert's Nass had fallen to the beach below. He scrambled down, and was proceeding homewards when he saw a French fleet sailing for the shore.

He hurried back and recounted his story to the incredulous inhabitants of Wolverton, who refused to believe any part of it.

They paid dearly for their scepticism. The French landed, stormed and sacked the town, although driven back soon afterwards by a troop from Brading.

Such, then, is the legend. The ghost of the murdered saint is said to haunt the scene of his death, but we are not in a position to corroborate this statement.

SEA-SHORE LIFE AT BEMBRIDGE

By Kenneth Barker.

Out of the two hundred and sixteen species of seaweed reported to grow in the island, Bembridge seems to be supplied with not more than eighteen or twenty. Most of these appear to live in the Littoral and Laminarian zones, that is, from high-water mark to about ten fathoms below the low-water line. Many of them, such as the Fucaceae, live on the rocks below Culver and on Long Ledge; but the greater number grow in the sea at the foot of the Ledge.

Several of the seaweeds have considerable use, although I have never seen the local inhabitants putting them to any use except as manure. The three species of *Fucus* found at Bembridge, for instance, are all rich in iodine and kelp. *Fucus vesiculosus*, or Bladder Wrack, contains a great quantity of salt, which is procured by burning the plant and using the ashes; the vesicles when chewed are supposed to have medicinal virtues, especially for the teeth and gums. *Laminaria digitata*, the Great Tangle, which grows in such profusion at the foot of Culver, produces large quantities of kelp, which is used in the manufacture of soap and glass. It is also very rich in iodine. The thick, woody stems can be utilized as knife handles, as they dry hard and contract so that they resemble horn. *Laminaria saccharina*, the Sweet Tangle, is so called because it contains mannite, a sub-

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stance almost as sweet as sugar. *Chondrus crispus*, the well-known Irish moss, when dried and boiled furnishes an excellent gelatine, that can be flavoured and made into a blancmange suitable for invalids.

A list of seaweeds with their Latin names and classification is not interesting alone; on the other hand, a rock pool on a sunny day, full of these weird and wonderful sea plants, has a beauty all its own, and makes a fit garden for any mermaid. Indeed, a town-bred person may well be struck dumb with wonder at the glorious colours which meet the eye and simply transcend description.

> . . . to float upon the deep
> And gaze with wistful eye on all below,—
> On groves of olive tangle, intertwined
> With bright festoons of gayer, gentler algae.
> Subundane drapery so rich and fair,
> That, like the pearl-diver, one is prone
> To cleave with downward plunge the sea-green wave,
> To grasp, and bear aloft the tempting prize,
> As trophy gained from mermaids' gay parterre.

The Mollusca are not very well represented at Bembridge, though the rocks are covered with Limpets and there are many Winkles. The Winkles used to be sent to the London markets, but are not now gathered for trade purposes, although a considerable number are eaten locally. There are a few whelks, but I have not seen any Grey Tops or any Dog Whelks, although they are said to be fairly abundant.

Sometimes on the shore an oval mass of soft white 'bone', about six inches long, may be found. This is

the bone of the common cuttle, which is frequently washed ashore here.

The small Rosy Anemones are seen in great numbers along Black Ledge and on the rocks round Culver Cliff. Many of them are above the low-water line and receive their food at each tide. As soon as the rising sea covers them, these strange animals (for they are animals, not plants) open out their tentacles and wait for their dinner to come along. When any small fish, swimming inquisitively past, touches one of the tentacles, the anemone immediately shoots forth a strong paralysing poison, which numbs the fish. The other tentacles quickly close round him, and he is drawn towards the mouth which engulfs him. The fish is soon digested, and the tentacles reopen for the next indiscreet little fish that wishes to investigate this ocean flower, which all too soon proves a delusion and a snare. The organization of anemones is in sixes; thus the young anemones start with but six tentacles, and they increase by multiples of six. The verticil sections of the body also number six. Many of these anemones are reproduced by spontaneous division, that is, they split in half, and the broken edges of the two halves soon grow tentacles, and they gradually become two separate and perfect anemones.

The Crustaceae of Bembridge is representative of the whole island. Shrimps and Prawns are both very common in season. There is an extensive lobster trade, the surrounding coast being literally sown with lobster-pots. These pots, by the way, are made by the fishermen themselves from the withies that grow on the cliffs. Among the rocks one may find the Hairy Porcelain Crabs and the Common Hermit

Crabs, which occupy old whelk shells. Occasionally also Arch-fronted Swimming Crabs may be seen along the reef. The common shore crabs are fairly numerous; sometimes the large edible crabs are found amongst the lobster-pots.

A few inshore fishes may be observed in the rock-pools—the pugnacious Father Lasher or Sea Bull-head (this little chap is all prickles), the pretty little Spotted Goly, and the quaint Blenny. I have never seen any Pipe-fishes or any Wrasse, but I believe they are quite plentiful.

Sea-weeds.	*Enteromorpha intestinalis.*
	„ *compressa.*
	Fucus ceramoides.
	„ *vesiculosus.*
	„ *serratus.*
	Himanthalia lorea.
	Halidrys siliquosa.
	Hypnea purpurascens.
	Cladophora aveta.
	Phyllitis fascia.
	Chondrus crispus.
	Rhodymenia palmata.
	Plocamium coccineum.
	Rhodomelea subfusca.
	Laminaria digitata.
	„ *saccharina.*
	Polysiphonia fastigiata.
Mollusca.	Limpet.
	Grey-top.
	Winkle.
	Whelk.
Coelenterata.	Rosy Anemone.

CRUSTACEAE.	Prawn.
	Shrimp.
	Lobster.
	Hairy Porcelain Crab.
	Common Hermit Crab.
	Arch-fronted Swimming Crab.
	Common Shore Crab.
	Edible Crab.

BEMBRIDGE FISHERMEN

By J. Pullan.

Perhaps one of the most primitive occupations of Bembridge is pursued by the fishermen who live at the Foreland, a little cape south-east of the village. The occupation is that of making their own lobster-pots. At the Foreland, a great part of the cliff, which slopes down to the sea, is covered with willow-trees. This enables the industrious fisherman to make his own pots, for from the willow he procures the necessary material. In autumn, when the willow-trees have shed their leaves, the fishermen cut the willow shoots, known by them as 'withies'. They then soak the withies in order to make them flexible and suitable for weaving. All through the Christmas season one may see the fishermen busily weaving their pots. After they have made them they weight them in order that they may not be washed away by the sea; they do this by tying two big stones to the pots; these stones are known by different names in different places, but the most usual term used in connexion with weighting is 'steening the pots'. The next and last thing they do is to attach ropes to the pots. To the end of these ropes corks are fastened. The pots are then ready and the fishermen bait them with meat. They drop the pots into the sea, sometimes ten miles out, and sometimes quite near the shore, but they only put them far out when the weather is settled, for sometimes a sudden storm will carry away the pots.

The fishermen also make prawn-pots, but these are much the same as lobster-pots, the only difference being that they are smaller. But in addition to lobster-pots and prawn-pots, they make penning-pots, torpedo-shaped baskets, with a small door at the top, in which they keep their bait alive.

These industrious fishermen used also to weave their own nets, but now they are not able to do so on account of the greatly increased cost of material.

THE BIRDS OF BEMBRIDGE

By A. W. Richards.

Shore and Cliff Birds.

The only gulls that nest on the Culver Cliff are the Herring Gulls, but Black-headed Gulls and Black-backed Gulls often pass by. If one goes to see the Herring Gulls towards the end of the nesting season, the young are seen to be floating on the sea, having left for good the ledge where they were hatched. In a few days the old gulls leave the cliff where they have nested and spend their time in the fields and on the beach. The Herring Gulls are very quarrelsome and give chase to the Cormorants. I once noticed a great crowd of Herring Gulls bear down on a young Jackdaw and peck it to death. One may sometimes see a Guillemot, but these are not very common here. Razorbills and Puffins have also been seen.

The Rock Pipit seems to be more common here than in many places. The House Martin builds its nest on the chalk cliff side. Jackdaws nest in the cracks and holes of the cliffs, usually towards Sandown.

The Birds of the Marsh.

The large grey fisher, the Heron, may be seen wading silently in a marsh pool in search of a frog or fish. Sometimes one comes to the rock reef near the Foreland and waits patiently for a fish. And when the sun sets he may be seen flapping slowly towards the east, uttering shrill cries as he goes.

The busy little Moorhen, with his cousin the Coot, inhabit the marsh lake in great numbers, and a few Dabchick are there also.

The Wild Duck (or Mallard) and the Tufted Duck are also seen in the marshes, the former being very common.

Among the smaller of the birds found at the marsh, there is the most beautiful of all British birds, the Kingfisher. In summer one may observe him perched on a willow bough, or perhaps skimming swiftly as the Swallow over the surface of the pool, one brilliant speck of colour.

If one peeps quietly amongst the willow branches or the reeds on the pool-side, it is quite likely that a Willow Warbler or Reed Bunting will be seen, as they are quite common there. The Pied Wagtail is seen here and on the shore in summer, and sometimes a Yellow Wagtail is seen.

Wood and Field Birds.

There is a rookery in the village, and the Rooks may often be seen with the gulls in the ploughed fields. There are also many Jackdaws to be seen in the fields as well as on the cliffs. There are Jays and Magpies in great numbers. The Starlings are seen in great numbers insect-hunting in the fields and orchards.

The Woodpigeon or Ring Dove is often seen, and the Turtle Dove in summer.

Often one may see the Kestrel Hawk hovering against the sky-line. In the summer evenings the Nightjar may be seen. The Barn Owl is very common.

The Green Woodpecker, seen so often in the woods and fields, is almost as noisy as the Jay. The

smaller Spotted Woodpecker may be occasionally observed.

The House Sparrow is very common everywhere. The Hedge and Tree Sparrows are less in numbers.

The beautiful little Goldfinch is happily not in the least rare, but it is a sad fact that very many of these birds are caught for cages every year.

The Chaffinch and Greenfinch are very numerous, but the Bullfinch is rather uncommon here.

The Golden Crested Wren is not so rare as in many places, and he may be seen creeping on the branches of the pine-tree, whilst the little Brown Wren is doing the same amongst the bracken.

One often sees a group of several Long-tailed Tits pecking busily in the hawthorn-trees.

The Blue Tit, the Great Tit, and the Coal Tit are here, the first being the most common.

A Redstart is occasionally seen on the shore.

The Whitethroat, Chiffchaff, and Yellowhammer inhabit the lanes and hedges.

The Peewit is seen on the Downs and in the fields and by the marshes.

The Partridges, red-legged and common, are plentiful.

Pheasants are reared in large numbers for shooting.

On the Downs there are many Skylarks and Meadow Pipits.

THE HERRING GULLS ON CULVER CLIFF

A Report by Members of the Bembridge School Natural History Club.

The following report on the Herring Gulls on Culver is the result of personal observation by members of the Club.

The name is due to the fact that these gulls follow the herrings and feed upon them.

Colour: head, white; beak, yellow with red underneath; mantle, French grey; legs, flesh coloured; wings, black with white tips.

The nests are of sea-weed, grass, &c., from the beach, generally high up the cliffs. Some are built on the beach.

Eggs: greenish brown background with brown and grey marking.

Feature of flight: gliding; turning very suddenly; resting in the air; flying in circles; keeping still in wind; able to glide against wind without apparent action of the wings.

Cries: very noisy and varied. Sometimes like 'ow-ow'; sometimes like a cat's cry.

Food: feeds on fish, rats, &c. Also on other eggs.

Young: colour, mottled pale brown. It is four years before they get full adult plumage.

The herring gulls fly with arched wings. They usually lay three eggs at a time. It is a common

sight to see them following the plough, and eagerly devouring worms and insects.

[As a complement to the above report, the following account of a Herring Gull at Bembridge School may be of interest.—EDITOR.]

Near to Bembridge School at the west end of Whitecliff Bay rises the great Culver Cliff, the home of sea-birds of great variety. Each spring large numbers of herring gulls nest there, and bring up their young in comparative safety. Many of their nests are built upon narrow ledges on the face of an almost precipitous cliff, with the result that many of the young birds when learning to fly fall off these ledges.

In the spring of 1920 a young gull who had thus fallen was found at the foot of the cliff alive but in danger of being drowned. The boys who found him brought him to school, where he lived for nearly four months. He soon became quite tame, and owing to his great intelligence and curious ways he remained a constant source of interest to the whole school. His favourite food was fish, which he swallowed in great quantities. A dog would sometimes attempt to share the fish. When this happened the gull attacked the dog, and always succeeded in driving him away. It was a wonder to us that the gull survived the size of his meals. He was wounded by a fall from his nest and for the first week or two of his life at school we applied boracic ointment. On one occasion the whole of the ointment slipped from the box on to the back of the bird. He turned his head and in a moment had swallowed this formidable pill. He appeared to suffer no subsequent inconvenience.

It was our custom to put a pail of water outside the school kitchen every morning for his bath. He showed an extraordinary joy in this daily bath, splashing most of the water out of the pail with great vigour. One day we forgot to put this pail out. The gull went for his usual bath, but finding it missing, strutted into the school dining-room and made harsh and angry noises. We hastened to get the pail, to which he rushed with every appearance of joy.

The bird grew so tame that he would remain contentedly on the hands or shoulders of the boys, and we all believed that when he learnt to fly he would still remain with us. He came to us in the month of May. In the early part of August he could fly a little. For the first few days he circled round the school and gardens but made no attempt to fly far. His flights grew longer but still he returned to us to be fed. One morning in late August we saw him making a straight line for Culver Cliff and we waited in vain for his return.

THE AGRICULTURE AND PLANT LIFE OF THE BEMBRIDGE DISTRICT

By Hugh Jones.

Agriculture.

Bembridge is a very favourable centre for farming.

Its area is 1,980 acres, of which 850 acres have been reclaimed from Brading Harbour.

Much of the woodland has been cleared for the production of cereals, chiefly wheat, barley, and oats. The growth of wheat by far exceeds any of the cereals, and includes the red and white species.

The nature of the soil is loamy, and in some parts is very heavy, with much clay. The subsoil varies with the different geological strata.

The chalk downs afford admirable pasturage for sheep, which are specially noted for the pureness of their wool. Much is exported to Yorkshire.

Corn and flour are exported from the island.

An interesting characteristic of the animal-rearing side of farming is that the Dorset-horn lambs are born in October and November. Very late lambs are born in January, but very few of the spring lambs are bred here.

Jersey and Shorthorns are the chief cows bred in the Bembridge district, some of these giving eleven gallons of milk per day.

The common cereals grown are wheat, barley, oats, and sometimes maize.

Potatoes, swedes, turnips, mangel-wurzels, carrots,

parsnips, cabbages, and sometimes sugar-beet are the chief vegetables grown in the district.

Trees.

There are very many rare species of trees, and it is thought that there is no other spot of equal extent to be compared in its tree life with this part of the island.

There are a few plantations remaining, but many of the old trees have been cut down in order to cultivate the loamy soil.

One of the outstanding characteristics is the numerous fig-trees growing in the farm-yards and cottagers' gardens, and reaching an enormous height. The green figs are gathered in August and taken to the local towns to be sold.

The vine is also seen in many gardens.

In addition to the common fruit-trees—apple, pear, plum, damson, and cherry—quinces, almond, walnut, and mulberry ripen to perfection, and produce plentiful crops.

The Sweet Bay attains the dimensions of a tree, giving forth a rich and pleasant odour, and producing abundant fruit. The eucalyptus-tree is also seen in many large gardens.

The valleys are richly wooded with elm, beech, and a few ashes and maples.

Small copses are very plentiful, richly decorated with the yellow gorse.

The rambling bryony and many species of honeysuckle and blackberry are found on the cliffs. Blackberries ripen until late in October.

The willows are very decorative features of the landscape.

The common prunus or bird-cherry is in full

bloom in February and March, and the evergreen laurestinus is also in flower in these months.

Wild Flowers.

Flowers of the Hedgerow in Spring.

How great a sight after the dull days of winter, with its drifting snow-clouds and leaden skies, to see for the first time the rich purple flowers of the Ground Ivy and the White Dead Nettle which is not far off. The Germander Speedwell (generally called Bird's Eyes) also lights up the bank of the hedgerow with a delicate patch of blue.

A little later, in March, we find the milk-white bloom of the still leafless Blackthorn.

But the favourite flowers of March are the sweet Violets clinging to the banks of the road-side ditches. The strong odour of the tall Hedge Garlic is scented from the country lane.

A little later in the season we find the Wild Arum —Lords and Ladies or Cuckoo Pint. The Lesser Celandine lights up the hedge bank with a blaze of golden-yellow. The Moschatel and Beaked Parsley are also seen in March.

A pretty sight is to see the catkins of the Nut Hazel blowing about in the March winds. When the April showers have commenced, we find the Greater Stitchwort, with its white starlike flowers. In early May the white flowers of the Privet decorate the hedges where it grows abundantly in the loamy soil. Another prominent shrub in the hedgerow is the handsome Dogwood, or, as the gipsies call it, Fellrush.

The climbing Goosegrass, called Cleavers, is seen on the hedge.

May and June see the mass of creamy blossoms of the Elder in hedges, woods, copses, plantations, and waste places. A pleasant touch of reddish colour is given to the hedgerows in springtime by the fresh leaves of the common Maple.

A hedge without the pink and white masses of the Hawthorn blossom would be a very sorry place indeed.

The last plant with which we are concerned in this section is the familiar Bramble, flowering from May to September.

Flowers of the Hedgerow in Summer.

The wealth of wild flowers is so great at this season that one hardly knows which way to turn for fear of overlooking something of interest.

Among the delicate pink blossoms, we can at once choose the Hedge Balamint and the Black Horehound. Where the hedge is shady we find the Greater Celandine.

June is the month to see the Wild Rose, Bryony, and Honeysuckle climbing up the high hedgerows. On the hedge bank or wayside the Cinquefoil is seen creeping along the grass, together with the Barren Strawberry.

The yellow Rocket and Wild Parsnip are upright plants with yellow heads of flowers. On the wayside we see Vetches, Thistles, Nettles, Knapweed, and Cow Parsley.

Flowers of the Hedgerow in Autumn.

The very beautiful hedgerow plant variously known as Traveller's Joy, Wild Clematis, and Old Man's Beard, is during the autumn one of the chief attrac-

tions of our hedges, more especially those growing on our chalk downs. More species of thistles appear and the Teasel, Toadflax, Hemlock, Wild Parsnip, Agrimony, Nipplewort, Greater Knapweed, Shepherd's Purse, Wormwood, and Ivy.

Wild Flowers of the Wood.

Spring.

The earliest flower we find is the Dog's Mercury which appears as early as February around Bembridge. Patches of the Lesser Periwinkle are very common in the woods and copses near by.

The Wood Sorrel, Snowdrop, Daffodil, and Primrose are very early flowers of our woods. The Snowdrop and Daffodil are seen in February, but I have found the Primrose in January and even before the old year is out.

The dense masses of the purple or blue flowers of the Wild Hyacinth or Bluebell cover the woods, where the little flowers of the Wood Anemone lie hidden.

In the woods and thickets we find the crowded blossoms of the Wild Cherry, and the Crab Apple is not far away. The feathery tufts are already bursting on the graceful Larch. In the shade of the woods lie the Dark Wood Violet and the Herb Robert or Wild Geranium as it is more frequently called.

Summer.

The first flower that greets our eyes is the tall soldier-like Foxglove. We find the Moneywort, Wood Loosestrife, and Wild Strawberry creeping along the ground.

The Wood Vetch, Wood Forget-me-not, Guelder Rose, Wayfaring Tree, Golden Rod, Columbine, Campion, Bugle, Ragwort, and Lily of the Valley are the wild flowers of the wood found in Summer.

Autumn.

Very few flowers are found in the woods in autumn. The Wood Sage, Nightshade, and Wood Betony are in flower.

The Mountain Ash is richly laden with wax-like red berries, which form such an ornament at that time, together with the pink fruit of the Spindle Tree.

YAVERLAND CHURCH

By A. de Selincourt.

It is curious how potent a spell the idea of antiquity exercises over men's minds. It is not only that one prefers—or supposes that one prefers—the art of older generations to that of one's own: it is not, that is to say, merely the result of a critical judgement; nor is it, on the other hand, merely the outcome of that instinctive and irresistible curiosity, which for ever drives a man to search beyond the boundaries imposed upon him by the accidents of time, place, and opportunity. There is some subtler and deeper reason than these. We are queer creatures; in the dullest of us there is something of the mystic and the visionary; we like to flatter and torment ourselves with thoughts too huge and dim for our narrow capacity, and to forget for a moment the ignominy of our ignorance by losing ourselves, like Sir Thomas Browne, in the agreeable delirium of an *O attitudo*. It is ourselves we look for in the past; when we look at old monuments, or read old books, it is not the makers of them alone whose image rises up before us; it is the sense of our own continuity that we so passionately seek to establish, the thought that we do not begin and end with the deplorable abruptness of our own individual lives, that we seek to shatter.

Buildings take the impress of antiquity, with all its associated ideas, more effectively than anything else; the generations of men who have entered and left by

their doors upon the same errand; the expanse of roof and wall offering so fine a material for time to exercise his art upon, as they fall into beautiful slow decay; and, above all, the fitness of the surroundings, hardly changed perhaps by the passage of years, in which they stand: all these enforce the essential appeal of antiquity more powerfully than can the slighter and more personal phenomenon of an ancient manuscript or picture. Of all kinds of buildings the most ancient that survive are churches and strongholds, the expression of the two most ancient of human passions: the desire to fight and the desire to pray.

England is not a rich hunting-ground for the antiquary. But we are ready in this respect to adapt our appetite to our means, and (in the matter of architecture at least) to get as much satisfaction out of a paltry eight centuries as might the enviable Cretan out of thirty or forty. The Church of St. John the Baptist, at Yaverland, is, by our English standards, a pretty venerable one. The original chapel was built in the twelfth century, and remained untouched until about thirty-five years ago, when considerable alterations and additions were made. The result is that the first impression made by the building is a little disappointing. The whole has an air of conscious neatness and propriety, due in particular to the unpleasing belfry spire with which our fathers saw fit to add to the decencies of divine worship. Above the south porch, itself an addition, a triangular patch of brown rough-cast makes a powerful ally in the cause of Victorian restoration. The whole is somewhat overshadowed by the magnificent and stately fabric of Yaverland Manor, distant from its eastern end by not more than a few yards. The church, in

spite of its much superior pedigree, seems to be seeking the protection of its more ancient neighbour, like a humble retainer who would face the world in the armour of reflected glory.

Such an impression is, however, an idle and a superficial one, and not at all in the spirit of a serious investigator or historian. The latter, as he is both diligent and profound, will tell a different story. He will show you the two Norman arches, both admirably preserved, one at the south door, the other at the entrance to the chancel; he will point out with interest and appreciation the elaborate diaper work on the tympanum of the former—a delicate piece of carving which, though much blurred by age, must once have been beautiful. And there is the older by many centuries than the church itself, which now stands in the corner at the western end of the nave, a brown Celtic jar, some eighteen inches in diameter, made of a kind of earthenware, very thin and fragile. And he will say as little as possible about the belfry and the rough-cast.

But having arrived thus far, I am assailed by misgiving. The speculations of antiquity with which I began were (in all honesty) set in motion by my memory of Yaverland church; and yet of that church I have said little that might reasonably show it. Something must be amiss.

There is a well-known story of how Shelley, walking one day with his friend Hogg—probably in the neighbourhood of Oxford—passed by a little country vicarage, and was so completely ravished by the tranquillity of its rustic seclusion that he announced his intention forthwith of taking holy orders. Now this reaction of his to the charm of that country parsonage

was a very intelligible one; a little violent perhaps, but *that*, being a question of degree, was the prerogative of genius, whereas in kind it might well have been shared by any one of us. I am not afraid, therefore, to say that my own sensations at the first sight of Yaverland resembled Shelley's on this memorable occasion: that is to say, having been there once, I was extremely anxious to return.

It was about five o'clock on a sunny evening in early March, the month of primroses. Across the stretch of turf which lies in front of the Manor and the church, four large white ducks were waddling in their ungainly way, and by the long low barns which edge the green a couple of farm hands were moving with infinite leisureliness about their business. A bucket clanked, and the jingle of reins came from the road down by the rectory. The grey stones of the Manor had caught a kind of warmth from the now almost horizontal rays of the sun. The day's work was nearly over. To the westward, the ground fell away, till it rose finally to the hill of St. Boniface, and, in the far distance, to St. Catherine's Down; the whole intervening hollow was a-shimmer, as if it had been a vast basin and the yellow light had filled it. It was very still; the quietness was only deepened by the familiar sounds of the country and of the farm—the jingling reins, the clank of the bucket, the quacking of the ducks—sounds that are dateless and immemorial. And the church, too, with its closed door, was quiet. For eight hundred years it had stood there, just on that same rise of ground, surrounded by the same sights and sounds—for how little altered, nay how unalterable in their essence are the sights and sounds of the remote country-side!—and

serving the same purpose to how many generations of men and women. The whole surrounding prospect, the time, the season, all combined to produce that sense of dignity and repose, or grave and settled immunity from the encroachments of a too intent and busy world, of self-sufficiency in isolation and mellow wisdom unmoved by the recurrent jar of changing creeds and conflicting opinions, of something stable and serene and beautiful, which is the light that draws our eyes backward from the strangeness and confusion of the present to the known and tranquil past.

LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS

Note by the Editor.

The Isle of Wight is rich in literary associations. Some of these relate in part to Bembridge. Others are concerned with distant places in the island. I have not thought that it falls within the scope of this book to discuss the great number of authors connected with the island unless they have some relation to Bembridge. An exception to this rule is perhaps Lord Tennyson. His home was at the other end of the island, but he knew Bembridge well, and has become so identified with the whole life of the island that a short note of his connexion with it is included. The account of Keats is included because he lived when at Shanklin within view of our Down and speaks of its white cliffs. Swinburne's name will always be associated with the district, for he climbed Culver Cliff successfully, though at the risk of his life. It is permissible to feel some doubt as to the extent of the literary claims of John Wilkes, but his house on Sandown Bay looked over Bembridge Down, which he knew well, and in any case he may truthfully be recorded amongst the historical personages associated with the district.

KEATS AND THE ISLAND

By the Editor.

The most illustrious literary figure connected with the Isle of Wight is of course John Keats. His deathless memory is the heritage of the race. The island cannot claim him as her son, but it had the privilege of giving him hospitality for a few brief weeks. Keats was born in 1795. At the age of twenty-two, having published his first book, he made his first visit to the island.

On the 15th April 1817 he reached Southampton, having travelled by stage coach. He writes to his brothers on this day announcing his arrival and telling them he has inquired for the boat to the Isle of Wight and that it will go at three.

On arriving in the Island he lodged at Carisbrooke and at first appeared greatly impressed with the beauty of the district. He wrote warm letters of appreciation to his friends and he worked at his poem *Endymion*, but he was alone and became lonely and melancholy.

One interesting incident he records in connexion with the house he lodged at. He found a portrait of Shakespeare in the passage which he said came nearer to his idea of him than any he had seen. Although he left his lodgings very quickly, the old woman who kept them insisted upon his accepting the portrait as a gift. He refers to this incident in his letters and shows much interest in the portrait.

On the 10th May he is at Margate and writes to Leigh Hunt that he had left the island because he thought so much about poetry that he could not sleep and had set off pell-mell for Margate.

Keats returned to the island for a second visit in 1819, and stayed about two months. During most of this visit he lived in Shanklin. Keats's Green was so named in commemoration of his visit. In his letters at this time he describes the literary work he is engaged upon, including *The Pot of Basil* and *The Eve of St. Agnes*. There are many references in his letters to the beauty of his surroundings, but he was ill during the whole of this time and his letters form a sad record. Keats had two lodgings in Shanklin, which was then only a small fishing village. It is not possible now to identify either of them. Happily the house where he lived at Carisbrooke still remains. It is now known as Canterbury House, in Castle Road. The house as it now exists is ugly and uninteresting. But it has been largely changed since Keats lived in it. The depressing suburban exterior is modern, and only a part of the interior remains as it was in Keats's day.

The following are interesting extracts from Keats's letters referring to the island:

From a letter to John Hamilton Reynolds. 17th April 1817, from Carisbrooke.

'. . . Yesterday I went to Shanklin, which caused a great debate in my mind whether I should live there or at Carisbrooke. Shanklin is a most beautiful place—sloping wood and meadow ground reach round the chine, which is a cleft between the cliffs of the depth of nearly 300 feet at least. This cleft is filled with trees and bushes in the narrow part, and as it widens becomes bare, if it were not for primroses on one side, which spread to the very verge of the Sea, and some fishermen's huts on the other, perched midway in the Balustrades of beautiful green hedges along their steps down to the sands. But the sea,

Jack, the sea—the little waterfall—then the white cliff—then St. Catherine's Hill—"the sheep in the meadows, the cows in the corn". Then, why are you at Carisbrooke? say you. Because, in the first place, I should be at thrice the expense, and three times the inconvenience—next that from here I can see your continent—from a little hill close by the whole north Angle of the Isle of Wight, with the water between us. In the third place, I see Carisbrooke Castle from my window, and have found several delightful wood-alleys, and copses, and quick fishes. As for primroses—the Island ought to be called Primrose Island—that is, if the nation of Cowslips agree thereto, of which there are divers clans just beginning to lift up their heads. Another reason of my fixing is, that I am more in reach of the places around me. I intend to walk over the Island, East—West—North—South. I have not seen many specimens of Ruins. I don't think however I shall ever see one to surpass Carisbrooke Castle. The trench is overgrown with smoothest turf, and the walls with ivy. The keep within side is one Bower of ivy—a colony of Jackdaws have been there for many years. I dare say I have seen many a descendant of some old cawer who peeped through the bars at Charles the First, when he was there in confinement. On the road from Cowes to Newport I saw some extensive Barracks, which disgusted me intensely with the Government for placing such a Nest of Debauchery in so beautiful a place. I asked a man on the coach about this—and he said that the people had been spoiled. In the room where I slept at Newport I found this on the window—

"O Isle spoilt by the mil*a*tary!..."'

To his sister Fanny. From Shanklin, 6th July 1819.

'. . . The place I am in now I visited once before and a very pretty place it is were it not for the bad weather. Our window looks over house-tops and Cliffs to the Sea, so that when the ships sail past the cottage chimneys you may take them for weather-cocks. We have Hill and Dale, forest and mead, and plenty of lobsters. . . .

Bonchurch too is a very delighttul place—as I can see by the cottages, all romantic—covered with creepers and honeysuckles, with roses and eglantines peeping in at the windows. Fit abodes for the people I guess who live in them, romantic old maids fond of novels, or soldiers' wives with a pretty jointure—or anybody's widows or aunts or anythings given to poetry and a piano-forte—as far as in 'em lies—as people say. If I could play upon the Guitar I might make my fortune with an old song—and get two blessings at once—a Lady's heart and the rheumatism.'

To Charles Wentworth Dilke. Shanklin, 31st July 1819.

'. . . A word or two on the Isle of Wight. I have been no further than Steephill. If I may guess, I should say there is no finer part in the Island than from this place to Steephill. I do not hesitate to say it is fine. Bonchurch is the best. But I have been so many finer walks, with a background of lake and mountain instead of the sea, that I am not much touched with it, though I credit it with all the surprise I should have felt if it had taken my cockney maidenhead. But I may call myself an old stager in the picturesque, and unless it be something very large and overpowering, I cannot receive any extraordinary relish.'

SWINBURNE AND CULVER CLIFF

By the Editor.

Although Swinburne did not live at Bembridge, he knew it well, in common with many other parts of the Island, and his name will always be associated with Culver Cliff, near the school grounds, for he climbed it, at the risk of his life, when a boy.

Swinburne's home was at Bonchurch, his father being Admiral Charles Henry Swinburne. His house was known as East Dene, at the eastern end of the village, under St. Boniface Down. The gardens of the house reached to the sea-shore. The greater part of his boyhood until he went to Eton was spent here. Other branches of the Swinburne family lived at Niton and at Shorwell.

Swinburne lived here an ideally healthy life for a boy, riding, climbing, walking, and above all, swimming and playing in the sea, for which he always had the deepest love. 'As for the sea (he wrote) its salt must have been in my blood before I was born. I can remember no earlier enjoyment than being held up naked in my father's arms and brandished between his hands, then shot like a stone from a sling through the air, shouting and laughing with delight, head foremost into the coming wave.... I remember being afraid of other things but never of the sea.'

When he was seventeen years old, during a Christmas holiday, Swinburne resolved to attempt the climbing of Culver Cliff as a deliberate test of his nerve in face of death. He believed, probably correctly, that it had never been climbed from the sea-foot by a human

being. He did it successfully, and he told the story of his experiences many years later in a letter to his cousin, Mrs. Disney Leith:

'. . . It was about the middle of the Christmas holidays and I went out for a good hard tramp by the sea till I found myself at the foot of Culver Cliff; and then all at once it came upon me that it was all very well to fancy or dream of deadly danger and forlorn hopes and cavalry charges, when I had never run any greater risk than a football 'rooge'; but that here was a chance of testing my nerve in face of death which could not be surpassed. So I climbed a rock under the highest point, and stripped and climbed down again, and just took a souse into the sea to steady and strengthen my nerve, which I knew the sharp chill would, and climbed up again, thinking how easy it would be to climb the whole face of the cliff naked—or at least how much more sure one would feel of being able to do it—if one did not mind mere scratches or bruises; but to that prehistoric sort of proceeding there were obviously other objections than the atmosphere of midwinter. So I dressed and went straight at it. It wasn't so hard as it looked, most of the way, for a light weight with a sure foot and a good steady head; but as I got near the top I remember thinking I should not like to have to climb down again. In a minute or two more I found that I must, as the top part (or top story) of the precipice came jutting out aslant above me for some feet. Even a real sea-gull could not have worked its way up without using or spreading its wings. So of course I felt I must not stop to think for one second, and began climbing down, hand under hand, as fast and as steadily as I could, till I reached the bottom,

and (equally of course) began to look out for another possible point of ascent at the same height. As I began again I must own I felt like setting my teeth and swearing I would not come down alive—if I did return to the foot of the cliff again it should be in a fragmentary condition, and there would not be much of me to pick up. I was most of the way up again when I heard a sudden sound as of loud music, reminding me instantly of the anthem from the Eton Chapel organ, a little below me to the left. I knew it would be almost certain death to look down, and next minute there was no need: I glanced aside and saw the opening of a great hollow in the upper cliff, out of which came swarming a perfect flock of the 'others'[1] who evidently had never seen a wingless brother so near the family quarters before. They rose all about me in a heaving cloud—at least, I really don't think the phrase exaggerates the density of their congregated wings—and then scattered. It did flash across me for a minute how nasty it would be if they flew at me and went for my indefensible eyes; but of course they never thought of anything so unnatural and unfraternal. I was a little higher, quite near the top or well within hail of it, when I thought how queer it would be if my very scanty foothold gave way; and at that very minute it did (I assure you on my word of honour that this is the exact truth, strange as it sounds and is), and I swung in the air by my hands from a ledge on the cliff which gave just room for the fingers to cling and hold on. There was a projection of rock to the left, at which I flung out my feet sideways and just reached

[1] Sea-gulls, of whom he loved to speak as being his brothers and sisters—the 'others'.

it; this enabled me to get breath and crawl at full speed (so to say) up the remaining bit of cliff. At the top I had not strength enough left to turn or stir; I lay on my right side helpless, and just had time to think what a sell (and what an inevitable one) it would be if I were to roll back over the edge after all, when I became unconscious—as suddenly and utterly and painlessly as I did many years afterwards, when I was picked up at sea by a Norman fishing boat upwards of three miles (they told me) off the coast of Etretat, and could just clutch hold of the oar they held out; but that is not in this story, which I only hope is not too long for the reader. On returning to conscious life I found a sheep's nose just over mine, and the poor good fellow-creature's eyes gazing into my face with a look of such friendly pity and sympathy, as well as surprise and perplexity, that I never ought to have eaten a mutton chop again. I couldn't help bursting into such a shout of laughter (I did the same thing when I came to in the boat) that the sheep scuttled off like a boy out of bounds at the sight of one of the masters. I don't think I was ever so hungry as when I got back to East Dene, and found that everybody was out looking for me (or so the servants said). After eating and sleeping I had an interview with my mother, of which I should not care to write except to the daughter of yours. Of course she wanted to know why I had done such a thing, and when I told her she laughed a short sweet laugh most satisfactory to the young ear, and said, "Nobody ever thought you were a coward, my boy". I said that was all very well but how could I tell till I tried? "But you won't do it again?" she said. I replied, "Of course not—where could be the fun?"

I knew now that it could be done, and I only wanted to do it because nobody thought it could.'

The exact point where Swinburne climbed the cliff is now unknown. At many places it is obviously unclimable. Probably the poet made the ascent on the west side.

TENNYSON

By A. de Selincourt.

In 1853, shortly after the birth of his son Hallam, Tennyson moved from his house at Twickenham to Farringford, at Freshwater. This 'ivied home among the pine trees' must always remain famous in literary history, and that too not for Tennyson's sake alone, but for the sake of other poets and men of letters, most notably of Browning and of Darwin, who visited him there. Fourteen years later Tennyson removed to Blackdown, near Hind's Head, driven from Freshwater by the growing crowds of summer holiday-makers. Farringford, however, was not given up, but remained in the poet's possession for the remainder of his life. He visited it for the last time four months before his death.

Much of Tennyson's best work, including *Maud* and portions of the *Idylls*, was written at Freshwater. The noble scenery of the district was a constant delight to him. It is not hard to imagine his pleasure in the soft, yet majestic, curves of the downs, the pearl-grey cliffs, the wide sweep of the bay at Chale, and the sea. On the highest point of the downs above Freshwater, near the cliff's edge, a stone monument stands in his memory.

JOHN WILKES

By the Editor.

Wilkes may be appropriately included in the list of literary men associated with Bembridge and district. One may think of him as a political firebrand, the centre of turbulent events, which raised fundamental questions in the eighteenth century as to the freedom of Parliament and the Press. But his tastes were also literary, and it was through his writings in the paper which he founded that he achieved success for some of the things for which he stood. These we must not here discuss. We have the simpler task of explaining why his name appears in a book about Bembridge. Wilkes for many years lived in a cottage at Sandown. Here he fled from his strenuous life in London to rest and to write. He knew Bembridge well. The house in which he lived no longer exists, but old engravings show it, a pleasant flower-surrounded cottage, in the centre of Sandown Bay looking towards Culver and Bembridge Down. There is a road near the site of his cottage which bears his name.

BEMBRIDGE TO-DAY

By the Editor.

The interest of the village of Bembridge to-day consists mainly in its natural beauty and in its surroundings. It is built on a hill. To the north it looks over Brading Harbour; to the south across the English Channel; to the east the coast of the mainland with its rolling downs can be clearly seen. On the west is the beautiful Bembridge Down ending in Culver Cliff.

For a village which has so long a history it is a matter of some surprise that there are not more old buildings. The most interesting buildings are found outside Bembridge, such as the Manor House and Church of Yaverland, three miles westward; or the Church, Town Hall, and Elizabethan cottages of Brading, across the Harbour. The most picturesque of the old buildings which remain are some of the tiny stone cottages, one or two of which probably date from the seventeenth century. Some authorities believe that Bembridge was much used by the Romans in the time of their occupation of the island, and that the road which now runs down to the life-boat station at the Foreland is an old Roman road. There is much to support this conjecture, for, from a harbourage at this point, the road would eventually take the Romans to the east of Bembridge Down through Centurions' Copse and across the tidal waters to Brading, where the Roman Villa is sufficient evidence that it was an important Roman centre in the island.

Bembridge offers us an example of an extraordinarily beautiful village with a great wealth of trees and flowers, and many modern houses, some of which are

built with taste and distinction. It offers general facilities for a healthy life, a warm aspect made bracing by the fact that the village is built high above sea-level and is swept by healthy winds. All forms of healthy outdoor life are possible, including one of the greatest—that of sailing. For the person therefore who lives in Bembridge for health and recreation, there are few more desirable places. There is, however, another aspect to consider of life in Bembridge.

The problem which faces Bembridge is the same problem which faces all places which have a large number of visitors seeking health and pleasure. There is great activity in the summer; there is little occupation for the villagers in the winter. It is, I think, a matter for deep regret and concern that there are so few educational and social agencies for the care of the youth of Bembridge. Its educational advantages are limited to an elementary school. There is no village club, and there is no agency whose exclusive concern it is to look after the social and moral welfare of the youth of Bembridge. Moreover, the industrial conditions are such as to make it difficult for a boy to enter employment which will give him a career in later life. Practically speaking there are only four occupations open to a village boy—building, farming, shop-keeping, or domestic service, and some of these occupations are in part at least seasonal only. It is, I think, always bad for a community to have forced upon it a life which is not socially and economically a healthy one, and in which classes are rigidly separated, one class seeking through its wealth the gratification of its pleasures, the other class largely occupied in meeting those wants. This is not a problem peculiar to Bembridge, but faces a great

number of the towns and villages of England to-day. If I refer to it, it is only in order to offer some constructive suggestions which I believe to be possible of realization and which would, I think, make village life here and elsewhere much more healthy, stimulating, and interesting.

These suggestions are as follows:

1. Those who live here under conditions of wealth and leisure should realize their responsibility for social conditions in the village. These conditions closely affect the lives of those who serve them and minister to their pleasures. Residents should take the lead in promoting a healthy local life.

2. The most immediately urgent reform is, in my opinion, better educational care for the children of the village. A secondary school, with generous facilities for creative work, should be founded in connexion with the existing village elementary school, possibly in the same building with extensions. The practical side of such a school, no less than the intellectual, would help to give boys real interests in life and lead them to careers of usefulness.

3. For older boys who have left school a youths' club should be founded under cultured and sympathetic guidance and leadership. Such a club might become a most powerful influence in their lives. It should meet both their social and intellectual needs. Nothing is sadder than to see each evening and on holidays a large number of the youths of the village propping up the lamp-posts for hours together because no institutions exist to meet their legitimate needs. The Club should be a centre for further education, for the practice of arts and crafts, for the promotion of plays, lectures, and music, and should include a library.

4. I think there should be a scientific attempt to organize crafts as a village industry. It has always seemed to me an illogical and disastrous policy to depend for all supplies of necessary articles of furniture, &c., upon outside sources. Under a proper system of education boys would be taught at school the use of tools and the making of simple but good things. On such a foundation it would be easy to build a craftsman's guild where a considerable portion of the needs of the village could be met. Under such a system men who are now unemployed, or partially employed whilst waiting for the short seasonal demand for their labour, would be making in their workshops articles of many kinds required by the community. Not only would such a system be economically sound, bringing prosperity alike to the individual and the community, but it would tend to raise standards of taste, and help towards an appreciation of the beauty of simple good things made by honest labour.

These suggestions affecting the welfare alike of young and old are put forward in order to help towards the solution of a very difficult problem, the restoration of the prosperity and interest of village life. If the problem can be solved at Bembridge, it can be solved elsewhere. But I am sure that it ought to receive the sympathetic attention of those who use Bembridge as a pleasure and health resort, and to them this appeal is addressed. I am grateful to the boys of the public school of Bembridge for help that they have given in developing the idea of civic responsibility. Their school is two miles from the village of Bembridge and their opportunities for active service are limited. Each term, however, they take

a play to the village and perform it free. Three times each year they hold exhibitions of their and others' work in their museum, and they offer the hospitality of these exhibitions to all who care to accept it in the village.

These actions, simple in themselves, extend the area of friendship amongst different classes. They extend mutual helpfulness and perhaps tend to promote a communal life in which noble interests and the opportunity to pursue them may ultimately expel their ignoble substitutes—idleness, gossip, slander, with their attendant degradation.

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